THE PAST RECAPTURED

The Past Recaptured

BY MARCEL PROUST

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY FREDERICK A. BLOSSOM



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MARCEL PROUST

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A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR OF

"A La Recherche du Temps Perdu"

"I don't think there ever has been in the whole of literature such an example of the power of analysis, and I feel safe in saying that there will never be another."—JOSEPH CONRAD.

The world of fashion in which Marcel Proust spent his youth and early manhood saw nothing of him during the last thirteen years of his life. A victim of chronic illness, he barricaded himself in his apartment, swathed himself like an Egyptian mummy, drew his [illegible]

the guidance of the Roman Catholic Church. An association in the 1890's with some of the aesthetes of that period resulted in the publication of a review, to which Proust contributed some juvenile prose and verse. Thereafter the fashionable Faubourg St Germain became his sphere, and it was there, among the illustrious and well-born, that he assimilated those fragments of gossip and family history which were later transmuted into a world in itself—the world of *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*

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TRANSLATOR'S DEDICATION

To

PEARL HANDELMAN

in grateful recognition
of intelligent cooperation

F. A. B.

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THE PAST RECAPTURED

CHAPTER I

Tansonville

THE whole day long, in that rather too countrified house at Tansonville, which had the air merely of a place to rest in when out for a stroll or during a shower, one of those houses in which every drawing-room gives the effect of a summerhouse, and where, in the bedrooms, on the wall paper of one the roses of the garden, and on the wall paper of the other the birds from the trees, have come to join you and keep you company (but singly, at any rate, for they were oldfashioned wall papers, on which each rose was so distinct that it could have been picked if it had been real, and each bird could have been put in a cage and tamed) having none of the pretentious interior decoration of the rooms of the present day, in which, on a silver background, all the apple trees of Normandy stand out sharply in Japanese style, to fill with fantasies the hours spent abed—that whole day I remained in my room, which looked out on the beautiful verdure of the estate and the lilacs at the entrance, on the tall trees at the water's edge, the [illegible] foliage glistening in the

to myself, "It is pleasant to have so much verdure at my bedroom window," until suddenly, in the vast, verdant picture, I recognised—but brushed in by contrast in deep blue simply because it was farther away—the spire of the church at Combray, not a representation of that spire, but the spire itself, which, bringing thus before my eyes distance in both space and time, had come and outlined itself on my windowpane in the midst of the luminous foliage but in a very different tone, so dark that it almost seemed as if it had been merely sketched in. And, if I stepped out of my room for a

moment, at the end of the hall, because it faced in a different direction, I caught sight of a band of scarlet, as it were, the wall covering of a small drawing-room which was of simple *mousseline*, but red and quick to burst into flame if a ray of sunlight fell on it.

During our walks together, Gilberte talked to me about the way Robert was losing interest in her, but only to increase his attentions to other women. And it is true that his life was cluttered up with many affairs with women, which, like certain masculine friendships in the lives of men who prefer women, had that air of hopelessly trying to defend their position and uselessly taking up space which, in most houses, characterises objects that can serve no useful purpose.

Once, when I had left Gilberte rather early, I woke in the middle of the night in the room at Tansonville and, still half asleep, called out "Albertine!" It was not because I had been thinking of her or dreaming about her, nor that I confused her with Gilberte. My love for Albertine was gone from my memory, but there seems to be an instinctive memory in the limbs, a pale and sterile imitation of the other memory, but one that lives longer, just as certain non-intelligent animals and vegetables live longer than man. Our arms and legs are full of sleeping memories of the past. A recollection aroused in my arm had made me feel above my head for the little bell, as in my room in Paris. And, not finding it, I had called out "Albertine!", thinking my friend, now dead, was lying there beside me, as she often used to do in the evening, when we would fall asleep together and, on awaking, calculate how long it would be before Françoise could get there and Albertine could safely ring the bell which I was now unable to find.

Robert came to Tansonville several times while I was there. He was very different from the man I had known. The life he lived had not made him stodgier, as in the case of M. de Charlus—far from it; producing a contrary change in him, it had given him more than ever the free and easy air of a cavalry officer—and that, too, although he had quit

the service at the time of his marriage. In proportion as M. de Charlus had become heavier, Robert, shewing the opposite effect of the same vice (of course, he was far younger, but one felt that he would only get nearer to this ideal as he grew older) like some women who resolutely sacrifice their face to their figure and after a certain age never stir from Marienbad, thinking that, since they cannot hope to retain their youth in all its aspects, youthfulness of form can best fill the place of the others—Robert had become more slender and quicker in his movements. This quickness also had various psychological causes, the fear of being seen, the desire not to seem to have this fear, the restlessness that comes from ennui and dissatisfaction with oneself. He was in the habit of frequenting certain low haunts, where, as he did not like to be seen entering or leaving, he would rush in, so as to present as little surface as possible to the unfriendly glances of hypothetical passers-by, as if he were taking the place by storm. And this whirlwind manner had stayed with him. Perhaps also it was an expression of the apparent fearlessness of a man who wishes to shew that he is not afraid, and does not want to give himself time to think.

To make the picture complete, one should take into account his desire to appear young, the older he grew, and even the impatience of a man bored with everything, tired of everything, as are all those who are too intelligent for the relatively idle lives they lead, in which their faculties do not find an outlet. It is true, of course, that the idleness of even these people may take the form of general indifference to everything. But, especially since physical exer[illegible] into favour [illegible] side the [illegible]

[illegible] becoming much more self-contained, he now scarcely ever shewed any affection toward his friends—toward me, for example. And on the other hand, toward Gilberte he would make a show of tender feelings which he carried so far that

it became ludicrous and unpleasant. Not that he was really indifferent to her. No, he loved her. But he lied to her continually and his deceitful nature, if not the substance of his lies, was constantly laid bare. And then he would think that the only way to get out of the difficulty was by exag-

ing for a business engagement with a certain gentleman of the neighbc

Paris, but

ning near

(which Robert had neglected to inform him of) by remarking that he had come out to the country to rest for a month and would not go back to Paris until the end of that time. Robert blushed; noticed Gilberte's sad and knowing smile; got rid of the bungler—by insulting him; went home before his wife; sent her a despairing note, in which he told her he had made up a lie in order to avoid hurting her, lest, seeing him go away for a reason he could not explain to her, she might think he did not love her (all of which, although written as a lie, was really true at bottom); then sent to ask if he might come to her room; and there, partly from real sorrow, partly from ex

through outrig

every day, he

of dying soon, sometimes fall in a heap on the floor, as if he had fainted. Gilberte did not know how far to believe him, assumed in each case individually that he was lying, was worried by th

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he had some

reason she did not dare oppose him and ask him to give up his trips. So that I was more puzzled than ever to understand why it was that Morel was received like the pet of the household wherever the Saint-Loup couple were, in Paris or Tansonville.

Françoise, who had already seen all that M. de Charlus had done for Jupien and all that Robert de Saint-Loup was doing for Morel, did not infer from this that it was a characteristic which recurred in certain generations of the Guermantes family, but instead—since Legrandin loved Théodore very much—she had finally, although a virtuous person, imbued with moral scruples, concluded that it was a custom so widespread that it had become respectable. She would always say of a young man, whether Morel or Théodore, "He found a gentleman who took a deep interest in him and helped him a great deal." And, since in such a situation it is the protectors who love, suffer and forgive, Françoise did not hesitate, as between them and the minors they were corrupting, to assign the noble rôle to them and credit them with being "big-hearted." She unhesitatingly blamed Théodore, who had done Legrandin many a bad turn, and yet it hardly seemed as if she could have any doubt as to the nature of their relations, for she would add, "Then the lad understood that he must put in something on his side and so he said, 'Take me with you; I will love you and be very good to you.' And, bless me! the gentleman is so good-hearted, it's a sure thing Théodore will certainly be better off with him [illegible]

[illegible]

go to that gentleman. He would willingly sleep on the floor and give you his bed. He has been too fond of young Théodore to turn him out of the house; it's certain he'll never go back on him'."

It was in the course of one of these conversations that, having asked the last name of Théodore, who was now living in the south of France, I suddenly realised that it was he who had sent me that letter about my *Figaro* article, written in an undistinguished hand but a charming style, and signed with a name which was at that time unknown to me.

In like manner, she had a higher regard for Saint-Loup than for Morel and was of the opinion that, in spite of

strange things Morel had done, the Marquis would never leave him in difficulties, for he had too much heart for that, or else it would be only after he had himself suffered heavy reverses.

Saint-Loup used to insist on my staying at Tansonville and once, although he no longer openly sought to please me, he unwittingly let me know that my coming had given his wife such pleasure that, according to what she had told him, she had been beside herself with joy for an entire evening, one day when she was feeling so depressed that my unexpected arrival had miraculously saved her from despair, "perhaps from something worse," he added. He would ask me to try to convince her that he loved her, telling me that he cared less for the other woman he loved and was going to break off relations with her. "And yet," he added, with such a feline manner and such a need of confiding in someone that I expected at times that the name "Charlie" would pop out in spite of him, like a number at a lottery drawing, "I had good reason to be proud. This woman who gave me so many proofs of her affection and whom I am going to sacrifice for Gilberte's sake, had never paid attention to any man and believed herself incapable of falling in love. I am the first. I knew that she had rejected all advances so completely that, when I got the adorable letter in which she told me she could not be happy without me, I could not get over my surprise. You can see that it would be enough to turn my head if it were not unbearable to me to think of seeing poor little Gilberte in tears. Don't you think there's something of Rachel about her?" he asked me. And, in fact, I had been struck with a vague resemblance which, at a pinch, one could find between them now. Perhaps this came from a real similarity in certain features (due, for example, to [illegible]

habits dear to the actress, such as always having red bows in her hair or a black velvet ribbon on her arm; also she dyed her hair to look like a brunette. Then, realising that her unhappy moods were spoiling her looks, she tried to offset this. Sometimes she overdid it. One day, when Robert was expected in the evening for a twenty-four-hour stay at Tansonville, I was astonished to see her come to the table looking so strangely different not only from her old-time self, but even from her everyday appearance that I sat there dumbfounded as if I had had in front of me an actress, a sort of Theodora. I was conscious that, in spite of myself, I was [illegible]

whether her husband would really come or whether he might not send one of those telegrams of which M. de Guermantes had so wittily established the model, "CAN'T COME LIE FOLLOWS," her cheeks became paler and the rings under her eyes darker. "Ah, let me tell you," he said to me, in a tone of forced tenderness so different from his former spon- [illegible]

can never know." And the most disagreeable thing about all this was the conceit of it, for Saint-Loup felt flattered to be loved by Gilberte and, without having the courage to say that it was Morel he loved, nevertheless, in talking about the affection which the violinist was supposed to have for him, he would give details that he must have known to be exaggerated, if not wholly imaginary, since Morel demanded more money of him every day. And so he would leave

Gilberte in my care when he went back to Paris. Furthermore (to get a little ahead of my story, since I am still at Tansonville) I had a chance once in Paris to observe him from a distance at a social gathering where his conversation, full of life and charm in spite of everything, brought the past back to me. I was struck to see how much he was changing. [illegible]

and stilted because of a most finished social training; the [illegible]

arity; even when he was motionless, that colouring, more marked in him than in any other of the Guermantes, like the sunshine of a golden day solidified, gave him, as it were, such a strange plumage, transformed him into such a unique and priceless specimen that one would have liked to own it for an ornithological collection; but when this flash of light transmuted into a bird also put itself in motion, in action, when, for example, I saw Robert de Saint-Loup come into a gathering where I was, he had such a way of throwing back his head, gaily and proudly crested with its tuft of golden hair a bit thinned out, and such proud and coquettish suppleness in the movements of his neck—like no other human being—that, seeing the curiosity and admiration, partly social and partly zoological, which he aroused, you wondered whether you were in the Faubourg Saint-Germain or at the Zoological Garden, and whether you were watching some noble lord walk across a salon or some wonderful bird walk about in its cage. And with ever so little imagination, the bird's song lent itself to this interpretation as readily as did his plumage. He conversed in what he thought was the most elegant style, thereby imitating the manner of the Guermantes family, but an indefinable something turned it into the manner of M. de Charlus. "I am going to leave you a moment," he said to me at that affair, Mme. de

Marsantes being a short distance away. "I am going to make love to my niece for a few minutes." As for this love he was always talking to me about, there was more to it, by the way, than merely his love for Charlie, although that was the only one that counted for him Whatever be the nature of a man's love affairs, folk always go wrong as to the number of people he has liaisons with because they mistake mere friendships for liaisons, which constitutes an error through addition, but also because they think that one known liaison excludes any others, which is an error of a different sort. Two people may say, "X's mistress . . . I know her," and mention two different names and neither of them be mistaken. A woman we love seldom satisfies all our needs and we are untrue to her with a mistress we do not love. As for the type of love affair Saint-Loup had inherited from M. de Charlus, a husband who has that inclination usually makes his wife very happy. The Guermantes men managed to be an exception to this general rule because those of them who had a liking for that sort of thing tried to make people think that, on the contrary, they preferred women. They openly paraded their relations with one woman or another and drove their own wives to despair. The Courvoisier men acted more wisely. Young Vicomte de Courvoisier believed him self to be the only person on earth and since the beginning of the world to be tempted by someone of his own sex. Imagining that this tendency came to him from the devil, he struggled against it, married a very beautiful wife, had children by her . . . Then one of his cousins pointed out to him that this penchant is rather widespread and went so far in his kindness as to take the Viscount to places where he could indulge it. M. de Courvoisier did not love his wife any the less; he redoubled his prolific zeal and they were cited as the best-mated couple in Paris. People did not say as much of the Saint-Loup *ménage* because Robert, instead of contenting himself with inversion, tortured his wife with jealousy by seeking mistresses in whom he found no pleasure.

It may be that Morel, being exceedingly dark-complex-

ioned, was necessary to Saint-Loup, as the shadow is to the ray of sunlight. One easily pictures to oneself in this very ancient family a noble lord, light-complexioned, golden-haired, intelligent, blessed with every kind of prestige and hiding in the depths of his soul, unknown to everyone, a secret predilection for Negroes. Robert, be it said, never allowed the conversation to touch on the kind of love to which he was addicted. If I said a word, "Oh, I don't know," he would reply, with such complete lack of interest that he would let his monocle drop. "I haven't the slightest notion of such things. If you want any information about that, *my dear fellow*, I advise you to apply elsewhere. As for me, I'm a soldier and nothing more. I'm as little interested in such matters as I am deeply interested in following the Balkan War. That used to interest you, too, accounts of battles. I used to tell you then that we would see again, even under very different conditions, battles of the standard types—for example, the great flank-turning attempt at the Battle of Ulm. Very well, different though these Balkan wars are, Lullé-Burgas is Ulm all over again—turning the flank. Those are the subjects you can discuss with me. But as for the sort of thing you were referring to, I know as little about that as I do about Sanskrit." These subjects, which Robert scorned in this way, Gilberte, on the other hand, as soon as he had left, was glad to take up in her talks with me. Not, of course, with reference to her husband, for she was unaware of all that—or pretended to be. But she liked to go into them at length as far as others were concerned, whether because she saw therein a sort of indirect excuse for Robert, or because the latter, vacillating, like his uncle, between strict silence on these topics and a need to unbosom himself and speak ill of others, had given her a great deal of information on the subject. Along with the rest of them, M. de Charlus was not spared; this was doubtless because Robert, without mentioning Morel to Gilberte, could not resist repeating to her in one form or another what was told him by the violinist, who pursued his former benefactor

with relentless hate. These discussions, to which Gilberte was so prone, gave me an opportunity to ask whether Albertine (whose name Gilberte had been the first to mention to me years before, when they were classmates) had a similar inclination in a parallel field. Gilberte refused to give me this information. And anyhow, it had long since ceased to have any interest for me. But I continued to inquire about it mechanically, like an old man who, his memory failing, asks from time to time for news of the son he has lost.

Another time I returned to the subject and again asked Gilberte whether Albertine had a love for women. "Oh no, not at all!" "But you used to say she was rather fast." "What! I said that? You must be mistaken. Anyhow, if I did say it—but you are wrong—on the contrary, I was talking of trifling love affairs with young men. And besides, at that age it probably didn't go very far anyhow."

Did Gilberte say this in order to hide from me the fact that she herself, according to what Albertine had told me, loved women and had made advances to Albertine? Or perhaps (for other people are often better informed about our lives than we think) she knew that I had loved, and been jealous of, Albertine and (since it is possible for other people to know more of the truth than we think, but to apply it too widely and make the mistake of assuming too much just when we were hoping they were making the mistake of not assuming anything at all) she supposed I was still jealous and she was merely trying to blindfold me with the bandage people always have ready for jealous folk. Either way, Gilberte's remarks, from the "fast" ways she used to hint at to her present guarantee of good character and habits, followed a line of development quite opposite to the statements of Albertine, who in the end had very nearly admitted partial relations with Gilberte. Albertine had astonished me by that admission, since, on the strength of what Andrée had to [illegible] "the little band," I [illegible] I had come to belie[illegible] so often happens

when we find a respectable young girl, knowing almost nothing of the realities of love, in what we had wrongly thought to be the most thoroughly depraved environment. Then I had gone back over my thoughts, taking up once more as true my earlier suppositions. But perhaps Albertine had said that because she wanted to seem more experienced than she was and impress me in Paris with the glamour of her perverted habits, as she had the first time at Balbec with her virtuous character. And simply so as not to look as if she did not know what was meant when I talked to her about women who loved other women, just as, when someone in a conversation mentions Fourrier or Tobolsk, we assume a knowing air, although we have no idea what they mean. She had perhaps lived with Mlle. Vinteuil's woman friend and Andrée, but separated from them by a water-tight bulkhead, as it were, they not thinking she was one of their kind, and—like a woman who, having married a literary man, tries to improve her mind—she had then sought information on the subject merely to fall in with my ideas by equipping herself to answer my questions, till one day she came to see that they were inspired by jealousy and she stopped then and there—unless it was Gilberte who lied to me. The idea then came to me that it was as a result of learning from the latter, in the course of a flirtation which he had presumably been carrying on in the special way that interested him, that she did not detest women, that Robert had married her, hoping for pleasures which he must have failed to get, since he went outside his home for them. None of these suppositions was absurd, for women like Odette's daughter or the young girls of "the little band" have such a mass and variety of alternating—

[illegible]

make up my mind to marry her, but had herself given up the

idea because of my vacillating, nagging disposition. It was with just that over-simplified formula that I explained my experience with Albertine, now that I looked at it only objectively.

One curious thing, which I cannot go into at length, was the way in which, at about this time, all the people Albertine had loved, all those who might have gotten her to do anything they wished, asked, pleaded, I may even say begged, if not

[illegible]

strange turn of affairs, occurring *when it was no longer of any* use, made me very sad, not because of Albertine, whom I would have received without joy if she had been brought back to me, not from Touraine this time, but from the other world, but because of a young woman I was in love with and could not find a way to meet. I said to myself that, if she should die or if I should cease to love her, then all the people who might have brought us together would be throwing themselves at my feet. But as it was, I was trying in vain to put some pressure on them, not having been cured by experience, which ought to have taught me—if it ever taught anything—that being in love is like being under an evil spell, such as those in fairy stories, against which one can do nothing until it is broken.

"It just happens," continued Gilberte, "that the book I have here touches on that subject. It's an old Balzac I'm ploughing through so as to keep up with my uncles, *La Fille aux Yeux d'Or*. But it's absurd, improbable, a beautiful nightmare.

"Besides, a woman might, perhaps, be watched over in that way by another woman, but never by a man." "You're mistaken; I knew a woman whom her lover had succeeded in literally isolating from the world; she could never see anyone and never went out except with devoted attendants." "Well, that ought to horrify you, you're so kind-hearted. We were just discussing with Robert the idea that ,

ought to get married. Your wife would get you well again and you would make her very happy." "No, I have too bad a disposition." "What an idea!" "It's true, I assure you! Besides, I was engaged once, but I couldn't go through with it"

I was not willing to borrow *La Fille aux Yeux d'Or* from Gilberte because she was reading it. But the last evening I stayed at her house, she lent me a book that left a rather keen though confused impression on my mind. It was a volume of the unpublished journal of the Goncourt brothers.

I was feeling sad that last evening, as I went up to my room, to think that I had not once gone to revisit the church at Combray, which seemed to be waiting for me, surrounded by green foliage in a violet-hued window. I said to myself, "Never mind, I'll do it another year if I don't die before then," not imagining any other obstacle but my death and not dreaming of the possible destruction of the church, which seemed to me destined to exist long after my death, as it had existed long before my birth.

When, before putting out my candle, I read the passage which I reproduce below, my lack of qualifications for a literary career, dimly felt years before along the Guermantes way and definitely proved during this visit which had now come to its last evening—when, as usually happens the night [illegible]

reveal any profound truth, and at the same time it seemed to me sad that literature was not what I had thought it to be. On the other hand, the ill health which was going to shut me up in a sanitarium appeared to me less unfortunate if the fine things spoken about in books were not finer than what I had seen. But, by a strange contradiction, now that this book mentioned them, I felt a desire to see them. Here are the pages that I read until fatigue closed my eyes:

"Day before yesterday, there suddenly dropped in, to take me home to dinner with him, Verdurin, former critic of *La*

Revue, author of that book on Whistler in which truly the peculiar style and colour technique of the unique American artist are frequently conveyed with great delicacy by that devotee of all refinements and prettinesses in the line of painting. And while I am dressing to go with him, he runs

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if they were individuals whom they considered in every way superior to him. 'Now, Goncourt, you know, and Gautier also knew, that my salons were very different from these ... wife's family as a master-

sheds about the towers of
a light which gives them

exactly the appearance of the towers coated with currant jelly which the old-time pastry cooks used to make, the conversation continues in the carriage that is to take us to Quai Conti, where is their residence, claimed by its owner to be the former mansion of the Venetian ambassadors and said to

a well-curb representing a crowning of the Virgin, which Verdurin maintains is positively some of the finest work of Sansovino and which he says serves as an ash-receiver for their guests. And, indeed, when we get there, in the diffused, glaucous moonlight, truly like that which classic painting puts over Venice and against which the silhouette of the cupola of the Institute reminds one of the Santa Maria della Salute in Guardi's pictures, I have somewhat the illusion of being on the bank of the Grand Canal. This illusion is sustained by the construction of the mansion, from the second

story of which the quay is not visible, and also by the reminiscent remarks of the master of the house, as he declares that the name of the Rue du Bac—I'll be hanged if I had ever given it a thought—came from the ferry by means of which some nuns of olden time, the Miramiones, used to betake themselves to the services at Notre-Dame. All through that section of the city I idled my childhood years away when my Aunt de Courmont lived there, and now I begin to love it all over again when I discover, almost next door to the Verdurins', the sign of the 'Little Dunkerque', one of the few shops which have survived otherwise than vignetted in the charcoal sketches and wash drawings of Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, and where the art-loving eighteenth century used to come and pass its idle moments bargaining over the French and foreign novelties and 'all the newest things produced by the arts,' as reads a billhead of this 'Little Dunkerque' of which Verdurin and I are, I believe, the only persons to own proofs and which is, indeed, one of the fugitive masterpieces of decorated paper on which the reign of Louis XV used to keep its accounts, [illegible] lent sea, swarming [illegible] tration from the *Éc*[illegible] *et des Plaideurs.* The lady of the house, who will shortly seat me beside her, tells me amiably that she has decorated her table exclusively with Japanese chrysanthemums, ar-[illegible]

[illegible]

sculptor Viradobetski, Swann, the art collector, a Russian lady of rank, a princess with a name in *-or* that escapes me —Cottard whispers in my ear that she is said to have fired point-blank at Archduke Rudolf, and according to her, in Galicia and all the north of Poland, I enjoy an absolutely unique position, since a young girl never consents to promise her hand in marriage without finding out whether her fiancé is an admirer of *La Faustin.*

"'You Occidentals cannot understand that,' the Princess (who, indeed, gives the impression of an altogether superior intelligence) declares by way of conclusion, 'a writer penetrating into a woman's intimate life' A man with clean-shaven chin and lip and the side-whiskers of a butler, retailing in a condescending tone the jokes of a high-school teacher hobnobbing with the best students of his class on Saint-Charlemagne's Day turns out to be Brichot, the university professor. When my name is mentioned by Verdurin, not a word comes from him to indicate that he knows of our books, and an angry fe

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tained the discordance, the hostility of a studied silence. We go in to dinner, and then begins an extraordinary procession of dishes which are simply masterpieces of the art of the porcelain maker, concerning which the artistic small talk during an exquisite repast is most agreeably listened to by the flattered attention of the lover of fine China—Yung-Tsching plates with nasturtium-red borders, bluish, turgid petals of water iris, the dawn streaking, with truly decorative effect, across a flig re-

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Dresden ware, more affected in the gracefulness of their design, with the drowsiness, the anemia of their violet-tinted roses, the deep purple markings of a tulip, the rococo effect of a pink or a forget-me-not—Sèvres dishes latticed with the fine network of their white flutings, with whorls of gold, or

Barry would recognise. And what is perhaps equally rare is the truly remarkable quality of what is served in these dishes, finely prepared foods, a whole feast such as Parisians, it should be loudly proclaimed, never have at the most fashionable dinners and which recall to my mind certain expert

cooks of Jean d'Heurs. Even the *foie gras* bears no resemblance to the insipid froth customarily served under that name; and I know few places where a simple potato salad is made as here, with potatoes as firm as Japanese ivory buttons and with the patina of those little ivory spoons with which Chinese women pour water over the fish they have just caught. The Venetian goblet in front of me is filled with a rich assortment of red jewels by the remarkable Léoville purchased at M. Montalivet's sale; and it is a delight to the visual imagination and also, I am not afraid to say, to the imagination of what used to be called the gullet, to see brought on a turbot having no relation to the stale turbots served at the most luxurious tables, with the outline of their backbones shewing through their flesh as a result of their long journeyings—a turbot served, not with the flour paste which so many chefs in wealthy houses prepare under the name of 'white sauce', but genuine white sauce, made with butter costing five francs a pound—to see this turbot brought in on a marvellous Tching-Hon platter, barred with the purple bands of a setting sun above a sea in which swims past, with comical movements, a group of lobsters, their

with hook and line a fish whose silver-blue belly is an enchantment of nacreous colour. When I comment to Verdurin on the exquisite pleasure he must derive from these refined dishes served in a collection such as no prince today treasures behind the glass of his cabinets, the mistress of the house interjects in a melancholy tone, 'It's easy to see you don't know him'; and she talks to me of her husband as a queer freak, indifferent to all these pretty refinements, 'a freak,' she repeats, 'yes, just that, a freak who would get more satisfaction out of a bottle of cider drunk in the slightly ribald coolness of a Norman farm.' And the charming woman, whose language shews a true love for the colourings of a countryside, talks to us with exuberant enthusiasm about

that Normandy where they have lived, a Normandy which she depicts as an immense English private estate, with the fragrance of its timber forests *à la* Lawrence, the velvet of its cryptomeria, within their porcelain-like border of pink hortensias, its natural lawns, the riotous mass of yellow roses falling over a peasant doorway, where the inlay of two intertwined pear trees resembles a very ornamental sign with the free fall of a blossoming branch on a bronze fixture by Gouthière, a Normandy apparently quite unsuspected by Parisians on vacation and protected by the gate of each enclosed piece of land, which gates the Verdurins confess to me they have unfailingly opened. At the end of the day, in a dreamy dying away of all the colours, with no light save that coming from an almost curdled sea which had the bluish tint of whey—'Oh, no, not at all the sea you know,' my neighbour protests vehemently in reply to my remark that Flaubert had taken my brother and me to Trouville, 'not at all, absolutely; you will have to come with me, otherwise you will never know'—they would return home through veritable forests formed by the rhododendrons with their flowers of pink tulle, completely intoxicated with the garden perfumes, which gave the husband dreadful attacks of asthma, 'yes,' she insisted, 'absolutely so, genuine attacks of asthma.'

"And then, the following summer they would return, hous-

though she has passed through so many distinguished *milieux*, has still retained in her language a little of the racy speech of a woman of the people, a language that brings objects before you with the colour that your imagination sees in them—my mouth waters for the life she confesses they led there, each working

huge that it had tw

luncheon for conver

with parlour games and recalling to my mind the *causeries* depicted by Diderot in that masterpiece, his letters to Mlle.

Volland. Then, after luncheon, everybody would go out, even on rainy days, when the sun came out, *the glistening of* a shower striating with its luminous filtering the gnarled limbs of a magnificent clump of century-old beeches which supplied at the gateway the verdant beauty fancied by the eighteenth century, and the shrubs, holding raindrops like *flower-buds suspended in their branches. They would stop* to listen to the dainty splashing of a bullfinch, enamoured of the coolness, bathing in the corolla of a white rose, shaped like an exquisite miniature Nymphenburg bath tub. And [illegible] es and flowers [illegible] 'Why, it was [illegible] with an angry [illegible] *he interesting* spots, all the motifs—I threw it up to him when he left us, didn't I, Auguste?—all the motifs he painted. As for the objects, he had always known them—that I must do him the justice to admit. But when it comes to the flowers, he had never seen any; he could not tell a marshmallow from a hollyhock. It was I who taught him—you are not going to believe this—*to recognise the jasmine.*' And it must be admitted that there is something odd in the thought that the painter of flowers whom all art-lovers today point to as the foremost, superior even to Fantin-Latour, perhaps would never, but for this woman here, have been able to paint a jasmine. 'Yes, I give you my word, the jasmine. All the roses he painted were done at my house or I took them to him. We called him simply "Monsieur Tiche" at our house; ask Cottard, Brichot and all the others whether he *was treated as a celebrity here. He himself would have* laughed at the idea. I taught him how to arrange his flowers; at the start he could not manage it. He never did know how to make a bouquet. He had no natural taste in selecting; I had to say to him, "No, don't paint that, it isn't worth the trouble; paint this." Ah, if he had only listened to us also in the arranging of his life, as he did in the arranging of his flowers, and if he hadn't made that disgusting mar-

riage!' And brusquely, her eyes feverishly absorbed in a revery directed toward the past, with her irritable chaffing and nervous stretching of her finger joints and toying with the flowing part of her sleeves, the lines of her posture of suffering made an admirable picture which I think has never been painted, in which could be read all the suppressed revolt, all the infuriated susceptibilities of a friend outraged in her woman's shame and sense of delicacy.

And thereupon she talks to us concerning the admirable portrait Elstir did for her of the Cottard family (which she gave to the Luxembourg at the time of her falling-out with the painter) admitting that it was she who gave the painter the idea of doing the man in full dress in order to get all that fine expanse of linen, and who selected the woman's velvet gown, which supplied something substantial in the midst of the dazzling effect of the bright-coloured rugs, the flowers and fruits, the gauze dresses of the little girls, looking like ballet dancers' skirts. Apparently it was she also who suggested the idea of representing the woman in the act of doing her hair, an idea for which the artist later received the credit, and which amounted, in short, to painting her, not on show, but caught in her intimate, everyday life. 'I said to him, "But in the woman doing her hair or wiping her face or

his wife, who was at bottom a very nervous woman, Swann admiringly called my attention to the necklace of black pearls worn by our hostess, who had purchased them, pure white, at the sale of a descendant of Mme. de La Fayette, to whom they were said to have been given by Henriette d'Angleterre —having turned black as a result of a fire that destroyed a part of the house occupied by the Verdurins in a street the name of which I cannot remember, the casket being recovered after the fire with the pearls inside, but now quite black. 'And I know the portrait of those pearls, on the very

shoulders of Mme. de La Fayette, yes, precisely,' Swann insisted, in reply to the somewhat amazed exclamations of the guests, 'their actual portrait in the Duc de Guermantes' collection.' A collection without an equal in the world, he announces, and one I ought to go to see, inherited by the celebrated Duke, who was her favourite nephew, from his aunt, Mme. de Beausergent, later Mme. d'Hayfeld, sister of the Marquise de Villeparisis and the Princess of Hanover. My brother and I used to be so fond of him in the person of the charming little boy called Basin, which is, in fact, the Duke's first name. Thereupon Dr. Cottard, with a tact which reveals in him the thoroughly well bred man, goes back to the story of the pearls and informs us that catastrophes of that sort produce in people's brains changes entirely similar to those one notices in inanimate matter, and he cites in a way really more philosophical than would many doctors, Mme. Verdurin's own footman, who in the terror of this fire, in which he almost perished, became a totally different man, his handwriting so changed that, when his employers, then in Normandy, received his first letter telling them what had happened, they thought it was the prank of some practical joker. And it was not only his handwriting that changed, according to Cottard, who maintains that, formerly a sober man, he became such a terrible drunkard that Mme. Verdurin had to discharge him. And, at a gracious signal from our hostess, this stimulating discussion was transferred from the dining-room to the Venetian smoking-room, where Cottard told of some genuine instances of dual personality he had witnessed and cited the case of one of his patients, whom he very kindly offered to bring to see me, whom one needed merely to touch on the temples in order to awaken him into a second existence, during

other life, and this goes sc

man in his original state, he is reported to have been arrested several times for thefts committed under his second personality, in which he is said to be simply an abominable rascal. At that, Mme. Verdurin keenly remarks that medi-

cine could supply truer themes for a theatre in which the farcical humour of the plot would be based on pathological misunderstandings, and this, leading from one thing to another, brings Mme. Cottard to tell how just such a situation was employed by a layman who is her children's bed-time favourite, Stevenson, the Scot—a name which calls forth from Swann the peremptory assertion, 'Why, he is a thoroughly great writer, I assure you, monsieur Goncourt, very great, on a par with the greatest.' And when, in the midst of my marvelling at the ceiling of the room where we are smoking,

student in every field, declares that those stains do not come from that at all, 'No indeed, not at all,' he insists with an

I stopped there because I was leaving in the morning and, besides, the hour had come when I must report to that other master in whose service we are for half of our time every day. The work he requires of us we perform with our eyes shut Every morning he returns us to our other master, knowing that otherwise we would do our work for him poorly. When our mind has opened its eyes again, the shrewdest among us, the instant our task is finished, inquisitive to know what, indeed, we can have been doing in the house of the master who makes his slaves lie down before sending them headlong to their work, try slyly to take a look at it. But sleep races ahead of them to obliterate the traces of what they wish to see. And, after so many centuries, we know very little on this subject.—So I closed the Goncourt

journal. Magical power of literature! I felt a desire to see the Cottards again, to ask them many details about Elstir, visit the "Little Dunkerque" shop if still in existence, get permission to go through that mansion of the Verdurins where I had dined. But I felt a vague uneasiness. It is true, I had never shut my eyes to the fact that I was unable to listen, or even to observe as soon as I was no longer alone; an old woman did not present to my eyes a pearl necklace of any sort and what people said about it did not penetrate my ears. And yet, I had known those individuals in everyday life; I had often dined with them; there were the Verdurins, the Duc de Guermantes, the Cottards; each of them had seemed as ordinary to me as Basin to my grandmother, who little suspected that he was the favourite nephew, the charming young hero of Mme. de Beausergent; each of them had seemed insipid to me; I remembered the countless inelegances of which each of them was composed.

Et que tout cela fît un astre dans la nuit!!!

I determined to ignore for the time being any objections to literature which these pages from the Goncourt brothers might have raised in my mind. Even leaving out of account the ingenuousness so strikingly shewn by the author of those memoirs, I could reassure myself in several other ways. In the first place, as far as I was personally concerned, my inability to observe and listen, of which the journal quoted had given me such a painful illustration, was, however, not absolute. There was in me one person who was able to observe fairly well, but he functioned intermittently, coming to life only when there was disclosed some general characteristic common to several things, which constituted his sustenance and delight. Then this person would observe and listen, but only a limited distance below the surface, so that the observation did not gain thereby. Like a geometrician who, stripping things of their perceptible qualities, sees only their linear substratum, what people said escaped me because what interested me was not what they wanted to say, but the way

they said it in so far as it revealed their characters or their ludicrous traits; or, rather, there was one thing which had always been the object of my investigation because it gave me a very special pleasure, and that was the point that two human beings had in common. It was only when I caught sight of this that my mind—until then drowsing even behind the seeming activity of my conversation, the liveliness of which masked from others a state of complete mental torpidity—suddenly took up the chase joyfully, but what it then pursued—for example, the identical recurrence of the Verdurin salon in various times and places—was located half-way down, below the range of vision, in a zone somewhat recessed. And thus the visible, reproducible charm of

ternal disease gnawing away there. It was of no use for me

together all the notes I had been able to make on the guests at a dinner, the pattern of the lines I drew represented a collection of psychological generalisations in which the special interest of the guest's remarks occupied hardly any place. But did that destroy all the value of my portraits inasmuch as I did not offer them as such? If a portrait in the field of painting brings out certain truths with regard to mass, light or motion, does that make it necessarily inferior to another portrait of the same person which does not resemble it at all and in which a thousand details omitted from the first one are minutely recorded, so that one might conclude from the second portrait that the model was a raving beauty, but from the first that she was ugly—a point which may have a documentary and even a historic importance, but which is not necessarily a verity in the realm of art? And then, my frivolous nature, as soon as I was not alone, made me wish to please, more anxious to amuse by gossiping than to learn,

by listening, unless I had gone to some social gathering to interrogate people on some question of art or some jealous suspicion which had already taken possession of my mind! But I was unable to see anything a desire for which had not [illegible] ad read, so that [illegible] then wished to [illegible] w it well, even [illegible] —have I been [illegible] ople that later on, as soon as an artist had brought their image before me when I was alone, I would have travelled leagues and risked death to see once more. My imagination had then been set in motion, had begun to paint. And whereas something may have made me yawn the year before, I now asked myself, with a gripping of the heart as I thought about it in anticipation and longed for it, "Shall I really be unable to see it? What would I not give for that!" When one reads articles in which people, even mere society people, are described as "the last representatives of a society of which no longer any contemporary exists," one may, of course, exclaim, "To think that they speak of such an insignificant individual with such fulsome praise and that that's the sort of person I would have lamented not having known if I had merely read the newspapers and magazines and not seen the man himself." But I was more tempted, on reading such pages in the newspapers, to think, "How unfortunate that, at the time when I was entirely preoccupied with getting in touch with Gilberte or Albertine again, I did not pay more attention to that gentleman; I took him for a society bore, a supernumerary, and he was a superior person!" The pages of Goncourt that I read made me regret that tendency of mine. For I might, perhaps, have concluded from them that life teaches us to set a lower value on reading and shews us that what the writer praises so highly did not really amount to much; but I might quite as well have concluded that, on the contrary, reading teaches us to set a higher value on life, a value we were not able to estimate and the extent of

which only books make us realise. We can, if need be, console ourselves for having found little pleasure in the society of a Vinteuil or a Bergotte, since the excessively proper middle-class morality of the one and the intolerable shortcomings of the other prove nothing against them, their talent being demonstrated in their works; and the same with the pretentious vulgarity of an Elstir in his earlier manner. Thus the Goncourt journal had disclosed to me that Elstir was none other than the "Monsieur Tiche" * who used to make such exasperating speeches to Swann at the Verdurins'. But what man of talent has not adopted the irritating tricks of speech of the artists of his circle until (as Elstir did, but as rarely happens) he developed a higher standard of good taste? Are not Balzac's letters, for example, strewn with coarse expressions which Swann would have died a thousand deaths rather than employ? And yet it is probable that Swann, refined though he was and free from every detestable absurdity, would have been incapable of writing *La Cousine Bette* or *Le Curé de Tours*. Whether, therefore, it is the memoirs which are wrong in attributing charm to the society of these men, when, as a matter of fact, it was disagreeable to us, is a problem of little importance, since, even if it is the writer of memoirs who is mistaken, that in no way detracts from the value of life, which produces men of such talent and which is to be found quite as truly in the works of Vinteuil, Elstir and Bergotte.

Quite at the other pole of experience, when I saw that the most curious anecdotes, which constitute the inexhaustible material of the Goncourt journal, furnishing enjoyment for the reader's lonely evenings, had been told him by those same guests whom his pages give us a desire to know and yet who had not left in my memory any trace of an interesting recollection, that, too, was not very hard to explain. Notwithstanding the *naïveté* of Goncourt, who inferred from the interest of the anecdotes that the man telling them was probably a distinguished person, it may very well have happened

* In the first volume of this series, this name is spelt "Biche."—*F.A.B.*

that mediocre men had undergone or heard of strange experiences, which they in turn related. Goncourt knew how to listen, as he knew how to observe; I did not. Moreover, all these facts would have had to be considered individually. M. de Guermantes assuredly had not impressed me as being that adorable model of youthful graces whom my grandmother would so much have liked to know and whom she held up to me as an inimitable model, according to Mme. de Beausergent's memoirs. But one must bear in mind that Basin was at that time seven years old, that the author was his aunt and that even a husband who *may sue for a divorce* a few month [illegible] prettiest of [illegible] ance before [illegible] gift and ev [illegible] could not have been ten years old at the time. Despite all the affectionate veneration which that talented poet, the Comtesse de Noailles felt for her mother-in-law, the Duchesse de Noailles, *née* Champlâtreux, it is possible that, if she had had to make a portrait of her, it would have contrasted rather sharply with the one Sainte-Beuve drew of her fifty years before.

What would, perhaps, have been more disquieting was the midway group, whose reputation implies more worth than does our recollection of them, which has succeeded in retaining a curious anecdote, but without our being able, as in the case of the Vinteuils and the Bergottes, to fall back on their works in order to form our opinion; they have not produced any, they have merely inspired some—to our great surprise, as we had considered them mediocre. One can understand, perhaps, that the drawing-room which, in the art galleries, [illegible] e dreamed of being able to meet in real life, hoping to learn from her the most precious secrets which the painter and his canvas did not give me, and whose magnificent velvet-and-

lace train is a bit of painting comparable to the finest of Titian's work. If, as I had come to realise some time before, it is not the cleverest nor the most learned man, nor the one with the best social connexions who becomes a Bergotte (even though his contemporaries did regard him as less of a wit than Swann and less of a scholar than Bréauté) but the one who knows how to become a mirror and thus is able to reflect his life, however mediocre, one can often say as much, and with more reason, of the models the artist chooses. In the awakening of the love of beauty in the artist who can paint everything, the model of the elegance where he will be able to find such beautiful motifs will be furnished him by people a little richer than he, in whose homes he will find what he does not usually have in his studio of an unappreciated man of talent who sells his canvases for fifty francs—a drawing-room with furniture covered with old silks, many lamps, beautiful flowers, beautiful fruits, beautiful gowns—people in relatively modest circumstances (or who would seem so to real society leaders, ignorant of their very existence) but who, for that reason, are in a better position to meet the obscure artist, appreciate him, entertain him, buy his canvases, than are the members of the aristocracy, who, like the Pope and the heads of state, have their portraits painted by artists who are members of the French Academy. Will not posterity find the poetry of an elegant home and of the beautiful costumes of our time in the salon of the publisher Charpentier, as painted by Renoir, rather than in the portrait of the Princesse de Sagan or the Comtesse de La Rochefoucauld, by Cotte or Chaplin? The artists who have given us the greatest visions of elegance gather their material among people who were seldom the most fashionable folk of their time, for the latter rarely have their portraits painted by the unknown interpreter of a beauty which they are unable to discern in his canvases, obscured, as it is, by a

mediocre models I had known should furthermore have inspired and advised certain effects which had fascinated me, that one or another of them should appear in the pictures as more than a model, rather, indeed, as a friend whom the artist wishes to have figure in his paintings, this was enough to make me wonder whether all the people we are sorry not to have known because Balzac portrayed them in his novels or dedicated his books to them in token of his admiration, and about whom Sainte-Beuve or Baudelaire wrote their prettiest lines—and, with even more reason, all the Récamiers and the Pompadours—would not have seemed to me insignificant individuals, either through a weakness in my own nature (a thought which at that time made me furious at being ill and unable to go and meet again all the people I had underestimated) or because they owed their reputation only to an illusory magical power in literature—a consideration which made necessary a change of dictionary for reading and consoled me for being obliged suddenly any day, because of my increasing ill health, to quit society and give up travel and art galleries, in order to go to a sanitarium for my health. Perhaps, however, this spurious side, this false light exists in the memoirs only when they are too recent, too near to the oral reputations, which, whether cultural or merely social, will later on disappear so quickly (and if scholarship then attempts to resist this burying, does it succeed in saving one out of a thousand from this ever-mounting oblivion?).

These ideas, some of which tended to lessen, others to increase, my regret at having no talent for literature, did not come to mind again during the long years I spent far from Paris, seeking to recover my health in a sanitarium (where, I might add, I had entirely given up the idea of writing) until, in the beginning of 1916, the institution could no longer secure a medical staff. Then I returned to a Paris very different from the one I had revisited once before, in August, 1914, as will shortly be told, for a medical examination, after which I had gone back to my sanitarium.

CHAPTER II

Monsieur de Charlus during the War; His Opinions and His Amusements

ONE of the first evenings after my second return to Paris, in 1916, desiring to listen to discussion of the only thing that interested me at that time, namely, the war, I went out after dinner to call on Mme. Verdurin, for, together with Mme. Bontemps, she was one of the queens of that war-time Paris which reminded one of the Directoire. As if by the scattering of a small amount of yeast of apparently spontaneous generation, young women were going about all day long in high, cylindrical turbans, such as a contemporary of Mme. Tallien might have worn. Shewing their civic spirit by their straight, Egyptian jackets of dark colour, very military-looking, over extremely short skirts, they wore leather puttees resembling the buskin *à la* Talma, or high leggings like those worn by our men at the front; it was, they explained, because they were mindful of their duty to rejoice the sight of those warriors that they still dressed up, not only in soft, clinging gowns, but in jewellery suggesting the army by its decorative theme, if, indeed, the material itself did not come from the army or had not been worked up in the army; instead of Egyptian ornaments re-
e were rings or bracelets
ng from the "75" field-
two English pennies, to
which a soldier in his dug-out had succeeded in giving such a fine patina that the profile of Queen Victoria on them looked as if it had been done by Pisanello; and it was likewise, they said, because they had it always in their thoughts that they wore very little mourning when one of their family
sorrow was mingled with
heir indomitable belief in
all hat of white English

crêpe (producing a most graceful effect and justifying the hope of various pleasant possibilities) and permitted them to replace the cashmere of former times with satin and *mousseline de soie*, and even to retain their pearls, "while still maintaining the good taste and correct deportment which it is unnecessary to recommend to Frenchwomen."

The Louvre and all the museums were closed and, when one read in a newspaper heading "Sensational Exhibition," one could be sure it had to do with an exhibition of gowns, not pictures, gowns intended, moreover, to awaken "that delicate enjoyment of art of which the Parisian women had been too long deprived." *Thus elegance and pleasure had* come back again, in the absence of the arts, elegance in dress [illegible] ar [illegible] ed [illegible] nk it strange that we should busy ourselves with the arts when the European Coalition is besieging the land of freedom." The dressmakers of 1916 did likewise, declaring with proud conscientiousness as artists that "to seek new creations avoid the commonplace, prepare for victory, work out for the generations to come after the war a new formula of beauty—that was the ambition that drove them on, the chimera which they were pursuing, as one could convince oneself by coming to inspect their charmingly equipped showrooms on —— Street, where the watchword seems to be to obliterate the heavy sorrows of the present hour with a bright and cheerful note, but, of course, with the self-restraint required under the circumstances. The sorrows of the hour might, one must admit, break down the moral stamina of the ladies if we did not have so many noble examples of courage and endurance to contemplate. That is why, thinking of our soldier boys who, deep down in their trenches, are dreaming of more comfort and modish apparel for the dear absent one left at home, we shall not cease to put an ever increasing refinement into the creation of gowns answering to the needs of the moment. The vogue, as one can readily understand, runs

especially to the English houses—our allies—and this year the *tonneau* dress is all the rage, its charming, easy-going style giving us all a delightful individual touch of rare distinction. It will, indeed, be one of the most fortunate incidents of this sad war," added the charming chronicler (while awaiting the recovery of the lost provinces and the awakening of national sentiment), "it will, indeed, be one of the most fortunate consequences of this war to have achieved charming results in the matter of women's dress with very few materials and, without ill-considered and vulgar luxury, to have created pleasing fashions out of almost nothing. Instead of the gown duplicated for several customers by the large dressmaking establishment, there is a preference now for dresses made at home, as expressing the ideas, taste and unmistakable bent of the individual." As for philanthropic activity, the thought of all the suffering caused by the invasion and of so many war cripples very naturally forced it to become "still more resourceful," which made it necessary for the ladies in the high turbans to spend the latter part of the afternoon at bridge-teas, commenting on the news from the front, while their automobiles waited for them at the door, with a handsome soldier at the wheel, gossiping with the doorman. And it was not only the headgear, with its strange cylinder towering above the face, which was new. The faces were new also. The ladies in the new hats were young women come from here and there, who had been leaders of fashion, some for six months, some for two years and others for four. And these differences were as important to them as were three or four centuries of seniority between two families such as the Guermantes and the La Rochefoucaulds in the days when I first began going out into society. The lady who had known the Guermantes since 1914 regarded as a social upstart the one who was introduced to them in 1916, greeted her with the lofty air of a dowager, stared at her through her lorgnette and confided, with pursed lips, that it was not even known for a certainty whether that lady was married or not. "It is all rather sickening," concluded the

1914 lady, who would have liked the cycle of new admissions to end with herself. These newcomers, whom the young men considered very old and whom, moreover, certain old men who had been in other social circles besides the most fashionable believed they recognised as not being so new after all, did not merely furnish society with congenial entertainment in the way of political conversation and music amid exclusive surroundings; more than that, it was necessarily they who furnished it, for, in order that things may appear new, even if they are old—and even if they are new—in art, as in medicine or in society, new names are necessary (and they were new in certain respects). Thus Mme. Verdurin had gone to Venice during the war, but, like people who want to avoid talking about sorrow and sentiment, when she said it was "stunning," what she was admiring was not Venice or Saint Mark's or the palaces, all that I had liked so much and which she dismissed offhand, but the effect of the searchlights in the sky, [illegible] up with figures.

again as a reactic [illegible]

The Sainte-Euverte salon was a shopworn sign to which even the presence of the greatest artists and the most influential cabinet ministers would not have attracted anyone. On the other hand, to hear a remark uttered by the secretary of some artist or the assistant secretary of some cabinet minister, people flocked to the salons of the new turbanned ladies, whose fluttering invasion had filled Paris as with a swarm of chattering magpies. The ladies of the first Directoire had a queen who was young and beautiful, named Mme. Tallien. Those of the second had two, both old and homely, named Mme. Verdurin and Mme. Bontemps. Who would have held it against Mme. Bontemps that her husband had played in the Dreyfus case a part that had been sharply criticised by *L'Echo de Paris?* The entire Chamber of Deputies having at a certain moment turned revisionist, it was necessarily among former revisionists, as among former socialists, that one had had to look for recruits for the party of Law and

Order, Religious Tolerance and Military Preparedness. Formerly M. Bontemps would have been cordially hated, because at that time the anti-patriots were dubbed Dreyfusards. But soon this name was forgotten and replaced by that of "opponent of the three-year military service law." M Bontemps was, on the contrary, one of the authors of that law, therefore he was a patriot. In society (and this social phenomenon, it should be remembered, is merely one application of a much more general psychological law) new ideas, whether reprehensible or not, cause alarm only until they have been assimilated and surrounded by reassuring elements. It was the same with Dreyfusism as with Saint-Loup's marriage to Odette's daughter, a marriage which had provoked an outcry at first. Now that everybody who was "anybody" was to be seen at the Saint-Loups', Gilberte might have had the morals of Odette herself and people would have gone there just the same and would have commended her if she had censured like a dowager new moral ideas not yet assimilated. Dreyfusism had now been given its place in a whole category of respectable and accustomed things. As for inquiring into its real merits, nobody dreamed of doing that now before approving it, any more than they formerly had before condemning it. It was no longer "shocking" and that was enough People scarcely remembered that it had once been so, just as, after a certain time, people are not sure whether a young girl's father stole or not When hard put to it, one can say, "No, it is the brother-in-law you're talking about, or someone else of the same name, but no one could ever say anything against that man." In like manner, there had certainly been different kinds of Dreyfusism, and a man who called on the Duchesse de Montmorency and who had brought about the passage of the three-year military service law could not be a bad fellow. And anyhow, we must "forgive and forget." And this willingness to forget was applied not only to Dreyfusism, but *a fortiori* to the Dreyfusards. Besides, there were now none but Dreyfusards in politics, since at one time

everybody who wanted to be in the government had been a Dreyfusard, even those who represented the very opposite of [illegible] wh [illegible] em [illegible] temps' Dreyfusism, invisible and contemplative like that of all the politicians, was no more in evidence than the bones under one's skin. Nobody would have remembered that he had been a Dreyfusard, for society folk are absent-minded and forgetful, also because a very long time had passed since then—and they pretended to believe it was even longer, for it was one of the ideas most in vogue to maintain that the period before the war was separated from the war by something as profound and representing as long a duration of time as a geological epoch, and even that nationalist Brichot, referring to the Dreyfus case, used to say, "In those prehistoric times." To tell the truth, this deep change brought about by the war was in inverse ratio to the intelligence of the persons affected—at least, above a certain level, for at the very bottom of the scale the downright idiots and the outright pleasure-seekers paid no attention to the fact that there was a war. But at the top, those who have created for themselves an enveloping inner life, pay little heed to the importance of current events. What alters profoundly the course of their thinking is much more something which seems to be of no importance in itself and yet which reverses the order of time for them, making them live over again an earlier period of their life. The song of a bird in the park [illegible] write pages of an infinitely greater value.

M. Bontemps would not hear of peace until Germany had been broken up into small states, as in the Middle Ages, the house of Hohenzollern having been dethroned and Wilhelm having received a dozen bullets in his hide. In short,

he was what Brichot called "a die-hard," which was the best certificate of good citizenship anyone could have given him. The first three days, it is true, Mme. Bontemps felt somewhat out of her element in the midst of the people who had asked Mme. Verdurin to introduce them to her, and it was in a slightly cutting tone that Mme. Verdurin replied, "The Count, my dear," when Mme Bontemps asked, "That was the Duc d'Haussonville you just introduced to me, wasn't it?"—her mistake being due either to failure to connect the name of Haussonville with any title whatsoever, or, on the contrary, to too much knowledge and to an association of ideas with the *Parti des Ducs*, of which she had been told M. d'Haussonville was one of the members in the Academy. By the fourth day she began to be firmly established in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. There were still sometimes seen around her the unknown remnants of a little known social circle, but that caused no more surprise than the pieces of eggshell around a chick to those who knew the egg Mme. Bontemps had hatched from. But within a fortnight she had shaken them off and before the end of the first month, when she said, "I am going to call on the Lévis," everybody understood, without her having to be more explicit, that it was the Lévis-Mirepoix she meant; and there was not a duchess who would have gone to bed without finding out *from Mme. Bontemps or Mme. Verdurin, at least by telephone*, what the evening official bulletin contained and what it omitted, how the negotiations with Greece stood, what offensive was being prepared—in a word, everything the public would not learn until the next morning or later and of which they had thus, so to speak, a dressmakers' advance shewing. In her conversation, Mme. Verdurin, in reporting the news, would say "we" when speaking of France. "Very well, this is how it stands: we are demanding of the King of Greece that he withdraw from the Peloponnesus," etc.; "we are sending him," etc. And in all her accounts there kept recurring continually "G H.Q." ("I telephoned to G.H.Q.") an abbreviation which she took the same pleas-

ure in using as women who did not know the Prince d'Agrigente lately took in asking with a smile, when he was mentioned, so as to shew they were up-to-date, "Grigri?"—a pleasure which in tranquil times is enjoyed only by society folk, but which, in these great crises, even the common people enjoy. Our butler, for instance, if the King of Greece was mentioned, was able, thanks to the newspapers, to say, just like Wilhelm II, "Tino," whereas until then his familiarity with royalty had been less high-toned, having been invented by himself, as when he used to say, in speaking of the King of Spain, "Fonfonse." It should be noted also that, in proportion as the number of prominent society folk who made overtures to Mme. Verdurin increased, the number of those she called "bores" decreased. By a kind of magical transformation, every bore who came to call on her or who angled for an invitation suddenly became an agreeable, intelligent person. In short, at the end of a year the number of bores had been cut down to such a great extent that the "fear and intolerableness of being bored," which had occupied such a large place in Mme. Verdurin's conversation and had played such a big rôle in her life, had almost completely disappeared. You would have said that, late in life, this inability to stand being bored (which, by the way, she used in former times to declare she had not experienced in her early youth) caused her less suffering, like some forms of migraine or of nervous asthma, which lose their force as one gets older. And the terror of being bored would doubtless have left Mme. Verdurin entirely, for sheer lack of bores, if she had not to some extent filled the places of those who had ceased to bore her with fresh recruits drawn from the ranks of her former *fidèles*. Moreover (in order to have done with the duchesses who were now to be seen regularly at Mme. Verdurin's) they came there, without realising it, seeking precisely the same thing as the Dreyfusards used to, namely, fashionable entertainment arranged in such a way that the delicate enjoyment of it should satisfy their curiosity about politics and meet the need for discussing

among themselves the incidents they had read about in the newspapers. Mme. Verdurin would say, "Come at five o'clock and talk about the war," just as formerly "about the Case," or, in the intermediate period, "Come and listen to Morel." Now Morel should not have been there for the reason that he had not been in any way exempted from military service. He simply had not reported for duty and was a deserter, but no one knew this. Another salon luminary was "In the Soup," who had gotten himself exempted, notwithstanding his liking for athletics. He had become so identified in my mind as the author of an admirable work which I was constantly thinking about that it was only by chance, when I set up a connecting current between two sets of recollections, that it dawned on me it was he who was responsible for Albertine having left me. And even then, this cross-current led, in so far as these vestiges of remembrance of Albertine were concerned, to a road which came to an end in an abandoned field, so to speak, several years *behind me. For I never thought of her any more.* It was a road not lined with memories, a path I no longer followed. Whereas the works of Andrée's husband were recent and my mind was constantly following and dwelling on this line of recollection.

I ought also to say that it was neither very easy nor very pleasant to cultivate the acquaintance of "In the Soup" and that the friendly feeling one had for him was doomed to many disappointments. As a matter of fact, he was already at this time very ill and spared himself any fatigue that did not seem likely to give him pleasure. Now, he classed in the opposite category only opportunities to meet people he did not already know and whom his eager imagination doubtless represented to him as offering some chance of being different from others. But as for the people he was already acquainted with, he knew only too well what they were like and what they would be like; they no longer seemed worth the trouble of a fatigue that would be dangerous and perhaps fatal to him. He was, in short, a

poor friend. And perhaps in his liking for new people there were to be found traces of the headlong audacity with which formerly at Balbec he plunged into athletics, gambling and all sorts of excess in eating and drinking. As for Mme. Verdurin, she wanted each time to introduce me to Andrée, not being able to admit that I had known her for a long time. Incidentally, Andrée seldom came with her husband, but she was a sincere and admirable friend to me. Loyal to her husband's æsthetic code, which was opposed to Russian ballets, she said of the Marquis de Polignac, "His house was decorated by Bakst. How can anybody sleep in it? I would prefer Dubufe."

Moreover, the Verdurins, by the inevitable development of æstheticism, which eventually devours its own tail, said they could not endure the modern style (besides, it came from Munich) nor apartments done in white, and now they liked only old French furniture in a dark-toned setting.

People were very much surprised at this time, when Mme. Verdurin could have anyone she wished at her house, to see her make overtures indirectly to someone she had completely lost sight of, Odette. They felt that she could not add anything to the fashionable social circle which the "little group" had grown to be. But a prolonged separation, besides allaying old grudges, occasionally revives an old friendship at the same time. And then, too, the phenomenon which causes the dying to utter none but old, familiar names, and old folk to take pleasure in memories of their childhood, this phenomenon has its equivalent in the social sphere. To succeed in her undertaking to get Odette to come back into her circle, she did not, of course, make use of her ultra-partisan supporters, but of the less devoted habitués, who had kept one foot in each salon. She would say to them, "I don't know why we never see her here any more. She may be sore over something, but I'm not. After all, what have I done to her? It was at my house she met both her husbands. If she wants to come back, she may be sure the door is open for her." These remarks, which would neces-

sarily have meant a heavy sacrifice for the pride of the "Mistress" of the house if they had not been prompted by her imagination, were duly reported, but without success. Mme. Verdurin awaited Odette in vain, until events which will be mentioned later brought about for entirely different reasons what the good offices of the two-faced emissaries, zealous though they were, had not been able to accomplish. So few are the easy victories, and the final defeats!

The circumstances were so much the same, while appearing to be different, that people quite naturally revived the old expressions, "right-thinking persons", "undesirable citizens." And, just as the old-time Communards had been anti-revisionists, so the leading Dreyfusards now wanted to have everybody shot, and they had the support of the generals, just as the latter, in the time of the Dreyfus case, had opposed Galliffet. To these gatherings Mme. Verdurin invited some ladies rather recently arrived, known in charitable circles, who the first few times came flashily gowned, with great necklaces of pearls, which Odette, who owned one as handsome that she had shewn off too much herself, looked at with stern disapproval, now that she was dressed in "war fashion," following the example of the ladies of the Faubourg. But women know how to adapt themselves. After three [illegible]
they
they
to simplicity.

Mme. Verdurin would say, "It is heartbreaking; I am going to telephone Bontemps to take the necessary steps tomorrow; they have again blue-pencilled the entire last part of Norpois' article, just because he hinted that Percin had been canned." For the stupid fad of the moment led each woman to take pride in using current expressions and she thought that in this way she shewed that she was up-to-date, like the middle-class woman who, when M de Bréauté or M. de Charlus was mentioned, would say, "Who? Babel de Bréauté? Mémé de Charlus?" Duchesses, for th

matter, are no different, and they took a similar pleasure in saying "canned," for among duchesses, to people of common birth who have a bit of the poet in them, it is the name that differs, but they express themselves according to the intellectual category in which they belong and in which there are also a very large number of middle-class folk. Intellectual classifications have no regard for birth.

All these telephonings of Mme. Verdurin's, by the way, were not without their drawbacks. I have forgotten to mention it, but the Verdurin "salon," while continuing in spirit and in fact, had been temporarily transported to one of the largest Paris hotels, the lack of coal and light making more difficult the Verdurins' receptions in the former, very damp residence of the Venetian ambassadors. But the new salon was not without its pleasant features. Just as in Venice the space, restricted on account of the water, determines the form of the palaces, and just as a bit of garden

nesday, and almost every day, all the most interesting and the most varied types of people and the most fashionably dressed women in Paris, all of them delighted to take advantage of the lavish expenditure of the Verdurins, which, thanks to their wealth, kept on increasing at a time when the richest people were cutting down expenses on account of inability to collect their incomes. The turn given to these receptions was somewhat altered, but without lessening their charm for Brichot, who, as the social connexions of the Verdurins extended more and more widely, found in their salon unexpected pleasures concentrated in a small space, like surprises in a Christmas stocking. And then, some days there were so many guests for dinner that the dining-room in the private apartment was too small and dinner was served in the huge dining-room downstairs, where the "faithful," while pretending hypocritically to be sorry to miss the

cosiness upstairs, were at bottom delighted—making a group by themselves, as they used to do in the little railway train —to be stared at and envied by those at the adjoining tables. Of course, in normal peace times a society item sent in a roundabout manner to *Le Figaro* or *Le Gaulois* would have conveyed to more people than could be accommodated in the dining-room of the Majestic the news that Brichot had dined with the Duchesse de Duras. But society editors having done away with this type of news since the beginning of the war (they made it up on burials, official honours conferred and Franco-American banquets) publicity could now be obtained only in this infantile and restricted manner, worthy of the earliest ages, before Gutenberg's invention—namely, by being seen at Mme. Verdurin's table. After dinner, they went upstairs to the "Mistress's" drawing-rooms and then the telephonings would begin. But many big hotels at that time were infested with spies, who made note of the news that Bontemps gave over the telephone with a lack of discretion which, by sheer good luck, was offset by the unreliability of his information, which was always contradicted by subsequent developments

At dusk, before the hour when the afternoon teas ended, while the sky was still light, one saw little brown spots in the distance which might have been mistaken, against the blue evening sky, for gnats or birds. In the same way, when one sees a mountain very far away, one might think it a cloud But one is impressed, knowing that this cloud is immense, solid, unyielding. Just so was I deeply moved because the brown spot in the summer sky was neither a gnat nor a bird, but an airplane piloted by men who were watching over Paris The recollection of the airplanes I had seen near Versailles the last time I went out with Albertine had no part in this emotion because the memory of that occasion had become a matter of indifference to me.

At the dinner hour the restaurants were crowded and if, passing by, I saw a poor soldier on leave, who had escaped for six days from the constant danger of death and was

about to go back to the trenches again, fix his gaze for an instant on the brightly lighted windows, I suffered as I used to at the hotel at Balbec when the fishermen watched us dining, but now I suffered more because I knew that the misery of the soldier is greater than that of the poor man, being a merging of all miseries and still more touching because more resigned, more noble, and because, with a philosophical shake of the head, without hatred, about to return to the front, he said, as he saw the slackers jostle one another as they reserved their tables, "You would never think there was a war going on here." Then at half-past nine, before anyone had had time to finish dinner, all the lights were suddenly put out on account of the police regulations, and the new jostling of the slackers, snatching their overcoats from the doormen of the restaurant where I had dined with Saint-Loup one evening when he was on leave, took place at nine thirty-five in a mysterious half-light like that of a room where a magic lantern is being shewn or of a playhouse used for projecting the films of one of those very cinemas to which these men and women diners were going to rush. But after that hour, for those who, like me on the evening I am speaking of, had stayed at home for dinner and were going out to call on friends, Paris was, at least, in certain quarters, darker than the Combray of my childhood; when we went to see one another, it was like calling on country neighbours. Ah, if Albertine had been alive, how lovely it would have been, the evenings when I dined out, to arrange to meet her outdoors under the arcades. At first I would have seen nothing and would have thought, with a shock, that she had failed to come to the meeting-place, when all of a sudden I would have espied one of her dear gray dresses beginning to stand out against the black wall and her eyes smiling at sight of me, and we would have been able to stroll along with our arms around one another, without anyone recognising us or disturbing us, and then go home together. Alas, I was alone and it seemed to me as if I were going to call on a neighbour in the country, one

such as Swann used to pay us after dinner,
Tanson-
nt-Esprit
winding
than I was meeting now on the street
from the Rue Clotilde to the Rue Bonaparte.
change with the

more as if I were on the shore ... Balbec; and to dream about so frequently than I ever felt at Balbec; and even other nature effects which had not existed until then in Paris gave one the impression of having just gotten off the train to spend a vacation away off in the country: for example, the contrast of light and shadow on the ground at one's side on moonlit evenings. Moonlight produced effects unknown in cities even in the dead of winter; on the Boulevard Haussmann its beams spread out over the snow, which no workers now swept away, just as over a glacier in the Alps. On this snow of bluish gold the silhouettes of the trees were reflected sharp and clear with the delicacy they have in certain Japanese paintings or in some of Raphael's backgrounds; they stretched out along the ground right at the foot of the trees as one often sees them in nature when the setting sun floods with a mirror-like sheen the fields dotted with trees at regular intervals. But, by an exquisitely delicate refinement, the field over which these trees cast their shadows, light as human souls, was a heaven-like field, not green but so dazzlingly white with moonlight falling on jade-green snow that one would have thought it a fabric woven of pure petals of blossoming pear trees. And in the squares the deities who presided over the public fountains, clasping a jet of ice, looked like statues of a twofold substance which the artist had wished to create by combining exclusively bronze and crystal. On these unusual days, all the houses were darkened; but sometimes in the spring, on the contrary, here and there, braving the police regulations, a private residence, or merely one floor, or even just

room of one floor, the shutters not having been closed, stood out as if resting all by itself on impalpable darkness, like a purely luminous projection, a phantom without substance. And looking away up, one could make out in the dim, golden-yellow light, a woman who in this engulfing darkness in which she seemed like an anchorite, took on the veiled, [illegible]

It occurred to me that it was a long time since I had seen any of the persons mentioned in these volumes. During the two months I spent in Paris in 1914, I had had a glimpse of M. de Charlus and I had seen Bloch and Saint-Loup, the latter only twice. The second time was certainly the one when he had been the most like himself; it had effaced all the none too pleasant impressions of insincerity he had made on me during the stay at Tansonville which I have just related, and I had recognised in him all his former fine qualities. The first time I saw him after the declaration of war, namely, at the beginning of the next week, while Bloch displayed the most rabidly patriotic sentiments, Saint-Loup could not speak of himself sarcastically enough for not reenlisting and I was almost shocked at the violence of his tone. He was just back from Balbec. "No," he exclaimed with force and humour, "any man who doesn't go to war, whatever excuse he may give, just doesn't want to get killed; he's afraid." And with the same emphatic gesture, but even more vigorous, with which he had scored other men's fear, he added, "And I, too, if I am not reenlisting, it is simply through fear, that's all." I had already noticed in different people that affecting laudable sentiments is not the only way of concealing reprehensible ones, but a newer way is to make a show of the latter in order at least not to appear to shut one's eyes to them. Moreover, in Saint-Loup this tendency was reinforced by his habit, whenever he had done something indiscreet or ill-advised for which

he might be censured, of announcing what he had done and saying he had done it on purpose. He must have caught this habit, I really believe, from some professor at the War College with whom he had lived on intimate terms and for [illegible]
no l [illegible]
ratif [illegible]
since [illegible]
taking part in the war that was starting. "Have you heard anyone say that my Aunt Oriane was going to get a divorce?" he inquired as he left me. "I know absolutely nothing about it personally. People say so every now and then and I have heard it announced so often that I shall wait until it has happened before believing it. I might remark that it would be very easy to understand, my uncle is a charming man, not only in society, but also toward his friends and relatives. He is even, in one way, much more kind-hearted than my aunt, who is a saint but makes him terribly conscious of the fact. Only he is a dreadful husband, who has never stopped being untrue to his wife, insulting her, treating her brutally and making her go without money. It would be so natural for her to leave him that that is one reason why the report may be true, but it is also a reason why it may not be true because it would be natural for people to imagine it and then announce it. And then, seeing that she has endured him this long . . . But I know very wel' [illegible]
and late [illegible]
him wh. [illegible]
been an [illegible]
He was startled and assured me there had not, that it was only one of those society rumours that spring up now and then for no good reason and disappear in the same way and the falseness of which does not make those who believed them more wary about putting faith in and circulating the very next rumour that comes up about an engagement, a divorce or something in politics. Forty-eight hours had not

passed before certain facts which I ascertained proved to me that I had been absolutely wrong in my interpretation of Robert's remark, "The trouble with all the men who are not at the front is that they are afraid." Saint-Loup had said that in order to take a witty part in the conversation and get off something original in the line of psychology until he was sure his reënlistment would be accepted. But meanwhile he was moving heaven and earth to bring that about—in which he was less original than he believed (in the sense he thought that word should have) but more profoundly French, of the style of Saint-André-des-Champs, more in agreement with all the best there was in the Frenchmen of Saint-André-des-Champs, nobles, burghers and serfs, deferential toward their overlords or in revolt against them, two equally French divisions of the same family, the Françoise branch and the Sauton branch, from which two arrows again pointed in the same direction, namely, toward [illegible] a nationalist [illegible] alist) make a [illegible] p asked him if he was to leave for the front, he assumed the air of a high priest as he replied, "Nearsighted." But when Bloch came to see me panic-stricken a few days later, he had completely changed his opinion about the war. Although "nearsighted," he had been passed as fit for military service. I was walking home with him when we met Saint-Loup, who had an appointment at the War Department to be introduced to a colonel by an ex-army officer. "M. de Cambremer," he explained to me. "Why, that's so! It's an old acquaintance of yours I am telling you about. You know Cancan as well as I do." I replied that I did, indeed, know him and his wife, also, and did not think very highly of them. But I was so accustomed, since the first time I saw them, to regarding the wife, nevertheless, as an unusual person, thoroughly familiar with Schopenhauer and having access, in short, to an intellectual world that was closed to her uncouth husband, that I was at first astonished to hear Saint-Loup reply, "His

wife is an idiot, you can have her. But he is a fine fellow who had ability and is still very good company." By the "idiocy" of the wife, Saint-Loup doubtless meant her mad desire to get into the best society, something which the best society condemns most severely. And the good qualities he found in the husband were doubtless more or less those his niece recognised in him when she declared him the most promising member of the family. He at any rate did not bother himself about duchesses, but, to tell the truth, that is a kind of intelligence which is as different from the intelligence of thinking people as is the "intelligence" which the public attributes to this or that rich man for having succeeded in making a fortune. But Saint-Loup's remarks did not displease me in so far as they were a reminder that pretentiousness is next door to stupidity and that simplicity has a flavour, somewhat hidden but pleasant. It is true, I had not had an opportunity to sample M. de Cambremer's simplicity. But that is just how it comes about that one person is so many different persons, according to the people who have an opinion of him, even independently of the different conclusions they may reach. In Cambremer's case, I had known only the outer shell. And the inner flavour of the man, to which others testified, was unknown to me. Bloch left us in front of his door, welling over with bitterness against Saint-Loup and declaring that "you shoulder-strapped fashion plates," strutting around staff headquarters, ran no risks, and that he, a common private of the second class, had no desire to get himself "shot full of holes" for Wilhelm. "It seems he is seriously ill, Emperor William," replied Saint-Loup. Bloch, who, like all people in close touch with the Stock Exchange, was peculiarly quick at picking up sensational news, added, "It is even said in many quarters that he is dead." On the Stock Exchange every sovereign who is ill, whether Edward VII or William II, is dead, every town that is about to be besieged has been captured. "They are suppressing the news," added Bloch, "only so as not to affect public opinion among the Boches.

But he died last night. My father got it from a most reliable source." Reliable sources were the only ones to which M. Bloch senior paid any heed when, through the good fortune he enjoyed of being in communication with them, thanks to his "high connexions," he received from them the secret tip that *Extérieure* bonds were going up or De Beers stocks were going to weaken. Moreover, if at that very moment there came a rise in De Beers or offerings of *Extérieure* bonds, if the market for the former was strong and active and for the latter uncertain and weak and people were holding back, the reliable source was still no less a reliable source. And so Bloch announced to us the Kaiser's death with a mysterious and important, but also exasperated air. He was above all particularly irritated to hear Robert say "Emperor William." I believe that even under the knife of the guillotine Saint-Loup and M. de Guermantes would have been unable to use any other expression. Two well bred men who were the only human beings left on a desert island, where they did not have to display good manners toward anyone, would recognise one another by these signs of breeding, just as two Latinists would quote Virgil correctly. Saint-Loup, even if he had been put to the torture by the Germans, would never have been able to say anything else but "Emperor William." And yet this *savoir vivre* is nevertheless an indication of serious mental restrictions. He who cannot throw them off remains merely a well bred man. That elegant mediocrity, it must be admitted, is delightful—especially with all the hidden generosity and unexpressed heroism that accompany it—as compared with the vulgarity of Bloch, who, at the same time a braggart and a miserable coward, exclaimed to Saint-Loup, "You couldn't say plain 'William' of course. There you are, you're scared and you're already crawling on your belly before him. Ah, these fellows will make fine soldiers at the front; they will lick the boots of the Boches. You're a lot of second lieutenants who know how to shew off in a circus parade, but that's all!" "Poor Bloch is insistent that I

shall do nothing but strut about," said Saint-Loup with a smile when we had left our companion. And I sensed clearly that strutting about was not at all what Robert wanted, although I did not realise what his intentions were as clearly as I did later, when, the cavalry remaining inactive, he got permission to serve as an infantry officer and then with the *chasseurs à pied*, and finally when there came the sequel that will be told later. But Bloch had no conception of Robert's patriotism, simply because Robert did not talk about it at all. While Bloch expressed to us some viciously anti-militarist convictions, once he had been declared fit for service, he had previously made the most blindly patriotic declarations when he thought himself rejected on account of nearsightedness. But Saint-Loup would have been unable to make these declarations, in the first place through a sort of delicacy of feeling which prevents one from expressing sentiments that are too deep and that one considers quite natural. My mother, in the old days, not only would not have hesitated a second to die for my grandmother, but she would have suffered terribly if anyone had prevented her from doing so. Nevertheless, as I look back, it is impossible for me to imagine as coming from her lips a remark such as, "I would give my life for my mother." Robert was just as reticent about his love for France, and he seemed to me at this moment much more of a Saint-Loup (as far as I could picture his father to myself) than a Guermantes. He would have been restrained from giving expression to those sentiments also by the, in a certain sense, moral quality of his intelligence. Intelligent and really earnest workers feel a certain aversion for those who put what they do into literature and exploit it. We had not been together at either the *lycée* or the Sorbonne, but we had individually taken certain courses under the same teachers and I remember Saint-Loup's smile as he spoke of those who, while, it is true, giving remarkable courses, tried to make themselves out to be geniuses by attaching ambitious names to their theories. If we even barely mentioned them,

Robert would laugh heartily. Our predilection naturally did not run instinctively to the Cottards and the Brichots but, after all, we did feel a certain respect for men who had a thorough knowledge of Greek or medicine but did not think themselves thereby justified in making charlatans of themselves. Just as all my mother's actions used to be based on the sentiment that she would give her life for her mother, as she had never formulated this sentiment to herself, she would under any circumstances have considered it not only useless and ridiculous, but shocking and mortifying to express it to others; in the same way it was impossible for me to imagine Saint-Loup (as he spoke to me of his equipment, of the errands he had to do, of our chance of victory, of how little the Russian army was worth and what England would do) uttering a single one of the most eloquent sentences that the most engaging cabinet minister can declaim before the deputies, bringing them to their feet with enthusiasm. However, I cannot affirm that, in this negative side of his character, which prevented him from giving expression to his finer feelings, there was not an effect of the "Guermantes spirit," of which we saw so many manifestations in Swann. For, if I found him predominantly Saint-Loup, there was also some Guermantes in his make-up and on that side, among the many incentives that aroused his courage, there were some that one did not find among his Doncières friends, those young men in love with their profession, with whom I had dined every evening and so many of whom had met death at the Battle of the Marne or elsewhere at the head of their men. The young socialists *who may have been at Doncières when I was there, but whom* I did not meet because they were not in Saint-Loup's set, had a good demonstration that the officers of this group were by no means "*aristos*," with the implication of haughty pride and base self-indulgence which the "common herd," the officers who had risen from the ranks, the Freemasons, gave to that nickname. And in similar manner, moreover, the officers of aristocratic birth found this same patriotism

in full swing among the socialists, whom, when I was at Doncières and the Dreyfus affair was at its height, I had heard them accuse of being men without a country. The patriotism of the military men, quite as sincere and deep, had assumed a well defined form which they believed inviolable and which it made them indignant to see "insulted," whereas more or less unconscious patriots like the Radical-Socialists, independent and without any well defined patriotic religion, had never been able to understand what a profound reality existed in what they took to be empty, vindictive formulas. It is true that, like them, Saint-Loup also had become accustomed to developing within him, as the most real part of himself, the search for and the working out of the best maneuvers, with a view to the greatest strategic and tactical successes, so that for him as for them the life of the body was something relatively unimportant which could easily be sacrificed to that inner part, the true vital nucleus around which their personal existence had no value except as a protective covering. I told Saint-Loup about his friend, the manager of the Grand Hotel at Balbec, who, it seems, had maintained that there had been defections (or, as he called them, "defectuosities") in certain French regiments at the beginning of the war, and had accused what he called "the Prussian militarist" of having provoked this, adding with a laugh, apropos of his brother, "He is in the trenches; the boys are within thirty yards of the Boches!" Until one day it was discovered that he was a Boche himself and he was put in an internment camp. "Speaking of Balbec, do you remember the former elevator boy at the hotel?" Saint-Loup inquired as he was leaving me, in the tone of someone who did not seem to know exactly who it was and counted on me to enlighten him. "He is enlisting and he has written to ask me to get him into the aviation corps." Doubtless the elevator boy was tired of going up in the captive cage of the elevator and the lofty altitudes of the staircase of the Grand Hotel no longer satisfied his ambition. He was going to "win his stripes"

otherwise than as a hotel porter, for our destiny is not always what we had expected. "I shall certainly endorse his application," said Saint-Loup. "I was just telling Gilberte this morning, we shall never have enough airplanes. That's what we need in order to see *what the enemy is preparing* and to destroy the chief advantage of an attack, namely, the surprise; the best army will perhaps be the one that has the best eyes. And how about poor Françoise, has she succeeded in getting her nephew exempted?" Françoise had been for a long time making every possible effort to obtain exemption for her nephew, but when she was offered a letter of recommendation to General de Saint-Joseph from the Guermantes, she had replied in a hopeless tone, "Oh, no, that would be no use; you can't get anywhere with that silly old man; he's the worst there is, he's patriotic." But as soon as it was a question of war, notwithstanding her *sorrow, she maintained that the "poor Russians" must not* be abandoned, since the two countries were "allianced." The butler, who, by the way, was convinced that the war would last only ten days and would end with a brilliant victory for France, would not, for fear the outcome might prove him a poor prophet, have had the courage, and would not even have had enough imagination, to predict a long and indecisive war. But in anticipation of this complete and

the men refuse to obey orders, lads of sixteen who break down and cry." (In order to "make her mad" *he tried* to tell her unpleasant things; he called this "giving her a dig, tossing her an apostrophe, throwing her a pun.") "Lads of sixteen, Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Françoise, and then, skeptical for a moment, "But they said they were not taking them under twenty; why, they're only children!" "Of course, the newspapers have been told not to say anything about this. And what's more, all the young men will be put in the front ranks; there won't be many of

them will come back. In one way, that won't be so bad; a good blood-letting, you know, is a benefit now and then; it will help business. And by Jove, if there are some tender-hearted lads who hesitate a bit, they will shoot them at once, a dozen bullets in their hide, bang! In one way, they have to do it. And besides, what do the officers care? They get their dough and that's all they're after." Françoise would turn so pale during each of these conversations that we were afraid the butler would kill her with a heart attack. But for all that, she did not mend her ways. When a young girl would come to see me, however much the old servant's legs might pain her, if I happened to leave my room for an instant, I would see her in the clothes closet at the top of a ladder—looking for some overcoat of mine, she would explain, to see if the moths were getting at it, but in reality eavesdropping. In spite of all my reprimands, she continued her habit of asking questions in a round-about, insidious manner, for which she had some time before adopted the formula, "because, of course." Not daring to ask me, for example, "Has that lady a home of her own?" she would look up timidly like a faithful dog and say, "Because, of course, that lady has a private residence . . ." avoiding the outright interrogation not so much from politeness as in order not to appear inquisitive. Finally, since the servants we are most attached to—especially if they no longer give us the attention or consideration their positions call for—remain, unfortunately, servants and, the more they believe they are getting into our social class, the more clearly they shew the limits of their own (which we would like to abolish) so Françoise would often permit herself peculiar remarks about me which a well bred person would not have made (just to annoy me, the butler would have said). For example, with a joy as well concealed but as profound as if it had been a case of serious illness, if I was warm and had beads of perspiration on my brow (to which I paid no attention), she would say to me, "Why you're dripping wet!" as surprised as if she were witnessing some strange

phenomenon, smiling a little with the disdain one feels for something improper ("You're going out and you've forgotten to put on a necktie!") but assuming an anxious tone of voice well calculated to make one uneasy about the state of his health. You would have thought I was the only person in the world who had ever been in such a perspiration. For in her humbleness, in her tender admiration for people who were far inferior to her, she adopted their common ways of talking. Her daughter having complained to me about her and having told me—where she got it, I have no idea—"She is always finding fault, says I don't shut the doors tight, *et patati patali et patata patala*," Françoise no doubt thought it was only her limited education which had till then deprived her of that fine expression. And from her lips on which had thitherto flowered only the purest French, I now heard several times a day, "*et patati patali et patata patala.*" It is curious, by the way, how little any one person's language, and even his thoughts, will vary. The butler, having formed the habit of saying that M. Poincaré's motives were not honourable, not for financial reasons, but because he had insisted there must be war, repeated this seven or eight times a day before the same regular audience and always with the same success. Not a word was changed, not a gesture, not an intonation. Although it lasted only two minutes, it was as invariable as a theatrical performance. His mistakes in French corrupted her speech quite as much as did her daughter's.

She no longer slept or ate; although she did not understand the news bulletins at all, she had them read to her by the butler, who understood them but little better and whose desire to torment her was often overcome by patriotic elation; he would say, with an engaging laugh, speaking of the Germans, "It must be warming up out there; good old Joffre is going to put over a fast one on them." Françoise did not understand any too well what it all meant, but she nevertheless felt that this remark was part of the well intentioned, eccentric nonsense that, as a matter of courtesy, a well bred

rate, she was glad that her new butcher boy, who, notwithstanding his trade, was rather timid (and yet he had started in a slaughter-house) was not old enough to be drafted. But for that, she might easily have been capable of going to see the Minister of War.

The butler could not have conceived that the bulletins were not encouraging and that the Allies were not advancing on Berlin, since he read, "We have repulsed, with heavy loss to the enemy," and so on, and he celebrated these engagements as fresh victories. However, I was alarmed at the rate at which the scene of these "victories" was drawing nearer and nearer to Paris, and I was even surprised that the butler, having seen in one bulletin that an engagement had taken place near Lens, was not disturbed on reading in the newspaper the following day that it had ended in our favour at Jouy-le-Vicomte, the outskirts of which we were holding firmly. Now the butler knew, or at least was familiar with the name of, Jouy-le-Vicomte, which was not so very far from Combray. But newspaper readers, like lovers, are blindfolded. They do not try to grasp the facts. They believe the editor's honeyed words as a lover believes his mistress. They are beaten and yet pleased because they do not believe themselves beaten but victorious. I should mention that I had not stayed long in Paris but had returned rather quickly to my sanitarium. Although as a rule the doctor kept us cut off from the world, they had delivered to me at different times one letter from Gilberte and one from Robert. Gilberte wrote (this was about September, 1914) that, however much she had wanted to stay in Paris in order to get news of Robert more easily, the constant raids over Paris by Taube planes had caused her so much alarm, especially for her little girl, that she had fled from Paris by the last train leaving for Combray, that the train had not even gotten as far as Combray and that it was only thanks to a

farmer's cart, in which she had made a frightful ten hours' journey, that she had succeeded in reaching Tansonville. "And guess what was awaiting your old friend there," she wrote as she ended her letter. "I had left Paris to get away from the German airplanes, imagining that I should be sheltered from everything at Tansonville. I had not been there two days when you will never guess who arrived—the Germans, who were invading the region after having beaten our troops near La Fère A German regimental staff, followed by a regiment, presented itself at the gates of Tanson-

[illegible]

effect, through contagion, of the spirit of the Guermantes, who were of Bavarian origin, related to the highest aristocracy of Germany? However that may be, Gilberte never tired of commenting on the perfect manners of the officers and even of the soldiers, who had merely requested "permission to pick one of the forget-me-nots growing beside the pond," and she contrasted these good manners with the uncontrolled vandalism of the French fugitives, who had overrun the estate and looted everything before the German generals got there. Anyhow, if Gilberte's letter in certain ways was infused with the Guermantes spirit—with Jewish *internationalism, others might say, but this would probably* be unfair, as will be seen later—the letter I received from Robert a good many months later was much more Saint-Loup than Guermantes and reflected, in addition, all the liberal culture he had acquired—in short, a most engaging and delightful letter. Unfortunately, he did not discuss strategy, as in our talks at Doncières, nor tell me to what extent he considered that the war confirmed or invalidated the principles he had outlined to me at that time. The most he did say was that, in reality, several wars had followed one another since 1914, the lessons learned from each having modified the manner of conducting the next one. For example, to the theory of "breaking through" had been added

the proposition that the terrain occupied by the enemy must first be entirely torn up by artillery fire. But then they had come to realise that this artillery fire, on the other hand, made it impossible for the infantry and artillery to advance over a terrain where thousands of shell holes had created just so many additional obstacles. "War," he wrote, "does not escape the operation of the laws laid down by our old friend Hegel; it is in a state of constant evolution." This was scant information, as compared with what I would have liked to know. However, what annoyed me still more was that he was not allowed to mention generals' names But anyhow, to judge by the little I could gather from the newspapers, the men who were conducting this war were not those about whom I had been so interested at Doncières to know which would shew the most ability in actual warfare. Geslin de Bourgogne, Galliffet, Négrier were dead. Pau had retired from active service shortly before the outbreak of the war. Joffre, Foch, Castelnau, Pétain, we had never discussed. "My dear fellow," Robert wrote, "if you saw all these men, especially those who come from the common people, workingmen and shopkeepers, who had no idea how much heroism was hidden away inside them and would have died peacefully in their beds without ever having suspected it—if you saw them run through a hail of bullets to rescue a comrade or bring in a wounded officer or, when struck themselves, die with a smile on their lips because the head surgeon informs them that the trench was retaken from the Germans, I assure you, old fellow, that gives one a fine conception of what a Frenchman is and makes one understand those historic periods which used to seem rather odd when we studied about them in school. The epic is so fine that you would find, as I have done, that words are no longer adequate. Contact with this spiritual grandeur has given the word *poilu* such a meaning for me that I no longer realise that it originally contained an allusion or a jest, any more than we think of this when we see the word *chouans*, for example. *Poilu*, I feel, like the words 'deluge' or 'Christ', is even now ready

for great poets, as were the barbarians in all their grandeur, before ever Hugo, De Vigny or the others made use of them. I said the common people are the best, but everyone is fine. Poor Vaugoubert, the ambassador's son, was wounded seven times before he was finally killed, and each time he came back from an expedition without having been hit, he seemed to apologise and want to explain that it wasn't his fault. He was a delightful fellow. We had become very much attached to one another. His poor parents got permission to come to the burial on condition that they would not wear mourning and would stay only five minutes because of the bombardment. His mother, a big, rawboned woman whom you perhaps know, may have been heartbroken, but no one would have guessed it. The poor father, however, was in such a state that I assure you even I, who have become quite devoid [illegible] the [illegible] shell [illegible] lf as I witnessed the state of complete collapse of poor Vaugoubert, who was reduced to a mere rag. It was no use for the general to tell him that it was for the sake of France and that his son had borne himself like a hero; all that only redoubled the poor man's sobs and he could not tear himself away from his son's body. Well, anyhow—and that's why *we must repeat to one another that 'they shall not pass'*—all those men, like my poor *valet de chambre* and Vaugoubert, really have prevented the Germans from passing. Maybe you think we are not advancing much, but we must not analyse; an army feels itself victorious by a sort of instinctive impression, the way a dying man feels he is done for. Now, we know we will win and we are determined to, in order to dictate a just peace, just not only to ourselves, but also to the Germans." Whereas heroes of mediocre and commonplace intelligence, writing poems during their convalescence, tried to put their descriptions of the war, not on a level with the incidents, which are nothing in themselves, but on a plane of banal æsthetics, following the old, familiar

rules and writing as they would have done ten years before of "the bloody dawn", "the quivering flight of victory", etc., Saint-Loup, on the other hand, much more intelligent and much more of an artist, retained his intelligence and his artistic sense and, while stationed at the edge of a swampy forest, used to jot down for me with excellent taste descriptions of the landscape, just as though he were there merely to hunt ducks. To give me an idea of certain contrasts of light and shadow which had "cast a spell of enchantment over his morning," he mentioned various pictures we both loved, and did not hesitate to refer to a page by Romain Rolland, or even Nietzsche, with the independence of men at the front, who were not afraid, as were the people at home, to utter a German name, and there was even a slight touch of bravado in his quoting from one of the enemy, as when Colonel Du Paty de Clam, in the witnesses' room at the Zola trial, passing in front of Pierre Quillard, a very violently Dreyfusard poet (whom, by the way, he did not know) recited some lines from the latter's symbolistic drama, *La Fille aux Mains Coupées*. If Saint-Loup mentioned in his letters an air of Schumann's, he always gave the title in German, and he did not beat about the bush to tell me how, at dawn one mor

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deed, he hoped to hear again after the war. And now, on my second return to Paris, the very day after my arrival, I had received another letter from Gilberte, who had doubtless forgotten the letter I have mentioned, or its contents, for in this second letter her departure from Paris in 1914 was presented retrospectively in quite a different light. "Perhaps you do not know, my dear friend," she wrote, "that I have been at Tansonville for nearly two years now. I arrived at the same time as the Germans. Everybody tried to keep me from leaving Paris. They said I was crazy. 'Why!' they said, 'you are safe here in Paris and yet you want to go into the invaded territory just when everybody else is trying

get away from there!' I did not deny the soundness of this argument, but what could I do? I have just one good quality, I am not a coward—or, if you prefer it that way, I am loyal and, when I heard that my dear Tansonville was in danger, I did not want to leave our old superintendent alone to defend it. I felt that my place was by his side. And, incidentally, thanks to this decision I was able pretty largely to save the château (whereas the others in that region, abandoned by their panic-stricken owners, have been nearly all destroyed from cellar to garret) and not only the château, but also the priceless collections that my dear father thought so much of." In short, Gilberte was now convinced that she had gone to Tansonville not, as she wrote me in 1914, to be in a safe place and get away from the Germans, but to face them and protect her château from them. They had not remained in Tansonville, she added, but from then on there had been a continual coming and going of military men at the château far in excess of that which drew tears from Françoise in the street at Combray, and, as she said quite truthfully this time, she had been leading ever since then the real life of those at the front. In consequence, her admirable conduct was mentioned with high praise in the newspapers and there was talk of giving her a decoration. The end of her letter was perfectly true. "You have no idea, my dear friend, what war is like, nor of the importance which a road, a bridge or a hill can assume. How often have I thought of you and of the walks you made so delightful when we used to go together over all this region now laid waste and where today tremendous battles are fought for possession of this or that road or hillside that you used to love and where we so often went together. Probably, like me, you never imagined that obscure Roussainville or deadly dull Méséglise, from which they used to bring us our letters and where they went to get a doctor when you were taken ill, would ever be famous places. Well, my dear friend, they have entered into eternal glory, side by side with Austerlitz or Valmy. The Battle of Méséglise lasted more than eight months; the Ger-

mans lost over a hundred thousand men there; they destroyed the town, but they never succeeded in capturing it. The little road you were so fond of, which we used to call 'Hawthorn Lane' and where you claim that, as a child, you fell in love with me (whereas, I assure you, the truth is that I fell in love with you instead) I can't tell you what importance it has acquired. The huge wheat field where it ends, well, that's the famous *cote 307*, the name of which you must have noticed recurring so often in the official bulletins. The French blew up the little bridge over the Vivonne which you used to say did not recall your childhood to you as much as you would have liked, the Germans threw other bridges across and during a year and a half they held one half of Combray and the French held the other." The day after I received this letter, that is to say, two days before that evening when I heard the echo of my own footsteps as I walked along in the dark, ruminating on all these recollections, Saint-Loup, back from the front and just about to return there, paid me a visit of only a few moments' duration, the mere announcement of which had caused me great emotion. Françoise's first impulse was to rush up to him in the hope that he would be able to get exemption for the timid butcher boy, who in a year's time would be old enough to be drafted. But she checked herself as she realised the futility of such a step, for the timid killer of animals had changed employers some time before and, either through fear of losing our patronage or in all good faith, our butcher woman had assured Françoise that she did not know where the lad, "who was not a good butcher anyhow," was now employed. Françoise had searched thoroughly in all directions, but Paris is large and the butcher shops are numerous, and she had gone into many of them to no avail, she had never been able to get trace of the timid, blood-bespattered young man.

When Saint-Loup entered my bedroom, I approached him with that feeling of timidity, that impression of the supernatural which, at bottom, all the men on leave gave us and which one feels on coming into the presence of someone

stricken with a fatal disease but who nevertheless still gets up, dresses and walks about. It seemed (especially at the beginning, for those who had not been living away from Paris, as I had been, had undergone the deadening effect of habit, which cuts us off from things we have seen many times [illegible]

"They will not be willing to go back; they will desert." And, indeed, it was not merely that they came from places which seemed to us unreal, because we had only read about them in the newspapers and could not imagine it possible that anyone could take part in such titanic combats and come out with only a bruised shoulder; they were to return to the shores of death, from whence they had come to be among us for a brief moment, strange beyond our comprehension, inspiring in us tenderness, awe and a sense of mystery, as do the dead whom we evoke, who appear before us for a second, whom we dare not question and who, moreover, at best would be able only to reply, "You could never imagine what it is like." For, whether it be men escaped from death at the front, such as soldiers on leave among the living, or hypnotised persons, or the dead evoked by a medium, it is strange how almost the only effect of contact with mystery is to increase—if that be possible—the insignificance of what we have to say. It was in this spirit that I greeted Robert, who still bore on his forehead a wound more imposing and more mysterious to me than the imprint left on the soil by some giant's foot. I did not dare ask him a single question and he made only the simplest remarks, and even then hardly at all different from what he would have said before the war, as if people, in spite of the war, continued to be the same as before; the tone of the conversations was the same; only the subject matter was different, and not so very different at that.

As near as I could gather, Robert seemed to have found in

the army occupations which enabled him gradually to forget that Morel had behaved as badly toward him as toward his uncle. Nevertheless, he still felt a deep friendship for him and was sei
continually
Gilberte not
Morel, he had only to go to Mme. Verdurin's.

I told Robert shamefacedly how little we in Paris were conscious of the war and he said that, even in Paris, it was sometimes "rather astonishing." He referred to a Zeppelin raid there had been the night before and asked me if I had had a good view of it, but in the way he would formerly have spoken of some spectacle of great æsthetic beauty. At the front, I admit, one can understand how there might be a certain daring jauntiness in saying, "It's marvellous, what a pink! and that pale green!" at a time when one may be killed at any moment, but there was none of this in Saint-Loup, in Paris and speaking of an unimportant raid. I mentioned to him the beauty of the airplanes going up into the night. "And they are perhaps even more beautiful as they are coming down," he replied. "I admit it is very fine when they go up, when they start to form 'a constellation' and in so doing obey laws fully as precise as those which govern the real constellations, for what seems to you a mere show is the assembling of the squadrons, orders being given them, the starting out in pursuit, etc. But don't you prefer the instant when, after melting out of sight among the stars, they come into view again to give chase or to come down after the signal to break ranks, when they 'loop the loop', even the stars no longer keeping their places? And those sirens, weren't they Wagnerian, though?—which, by the way, was very appropriate to welcome the arrival of the Germans; it made a sort of national hymn, a *Wacht am Rhein* with the *Kronprinz* and the princesses in the imperial box; it made one wonder whether it was not Valkyries, rather than aviators, who were going up into the sky." He seemed to take pleasure in this comparison of aviators to Valkyries and explained it, more-

over, with purely musical reasoning. "By Jove, the music of the sirens certainly was like a *Ride of the Valkyries*. It is, indeed, only when the Germans come that one can hear some Wagner in Paris." From certain points of view, the comparison was not false. The city was like a shapeless black mass which suddenly moved from the depths of night into the light and up into the sky, where one by one the aviators rose upward in response to the shrieking call of the sirens, while, with a slower but more insidious and alarming motion, for their piercing gaze brought to mind the yet invisible object which perhaps was already near, the searchlights swept ceaselessly back and forth, ferreted out the enemy, encircled him with their beams until the airplanes, following their direction, should leap in pursuit to seize him. And in squadron after squadron the aviators shot up, Valkyrie-like, from the city, now transported into the sky. However, some corners of the earth, close beside the houses, became lighted up and I told Saint-Loup that, if he had been at home the evening before, while he was watching the "apocalypse" in the sky, he could have seen on earth (as in the burial of the Comte d'Orgaz by El Greco, where these different planes are parallel) a real vaudeville played by characters in their night clothes, whose well known names ought to have been reported to some successor of that Ferrari whose society notes had so often amused Saint-Loup and me that we had entertained ourselves by making up some of our own. And we would have done the same again that day as if there had been no war going on, but on a thoroughly war-time subject—"The Zeppelin Scare. Among those present: the Duchesse de Guermantes, superb in her nightgown; the Duc de Guermantes ineffable in pink pyjamas and bathrobe," etc., etc. "I am sure," Robert said, "in all the large hotels the American Jewesses were to be seen in their nightgowns, clasping to their scrawny bosoms the pearl necklaces that are going to make it possible for them to marry penniless dukes. On those evenings, the Ritz Hotel must look like the Free Trade Hotel."

I asked Saint-Loup whether this war had confirmed what we used to say at Doncières about past wars. I recalled to him some remarks he had himself forgotten about imitation battles worked out by generals-to-be. "The sham attack," I said, "is now hardly any longer possible in these operations which have to be prepared for in advance with such massing of artillery. And what you have told me since then about reconnoitering by airplane, which obviously you could not foresee, makes impossible the use of the Napoleonic stratagems." "You are quite mistaken," he replied. "Obviously this war is different from all previous wars and is itself made up of a series of wars, the latest one being always an innovation on the one that preceded it. We have to adapt ourselves to a new formula worked out by the enemy in order to defend ourselves from it, and then he starts over again to invent something new, but, as in all human affairs, the old tricks still work. Only last evening, the most intelligent of our military critics wrote, 'When the Germans wanted to liberate East Prussia, they began the operation with a powerful demonstration away to the south, against Warsaw, sacrificing ten thousand men to deceive the enemy. When, at the beginning of 1915, they organised Archduke Eugene's mobile army in order to relieve menaced Hungary, they spread the report that it was intended for an operation against Serbia. In the same way in 1800, the army that was going to be used against Italy was specifically designated as a reserve army and seemed to be intended not to cross the Alps, but to support the armies engaged on the northern fronts. Hindenburg's ruse of attacking Warsaw in order to [illegible] had forgotten. And, since the war is not over, those ruses will be used again and they will succeed, for a trick is never finally exposed for all time; it worked once because it was effective and it will always work." And in fact, a long time after this conversation with Saint-Loup, while the attention

of the Allies was fixed on Petrograd, against which capital it was thought the Germans were beginning their march, they were preparing their most powerful offensive against Italy. Saint-Loup cited to me many other instances of imitating old military tactics—or, if you consider warfare a science, not an art, then of the application of permanent laws. "I do not mean to say," Saint-Loup continued, "that the art of war is a science, for that would be a contradiction of terms. And, even if warfare is a science, we find differences of opinion, disputes and contradictions among military scientists, which, by the way, are, from one point of view, merely a question of chronological development of military theory. This is rather reassuring, for, in so far as it is true, it does not necessarily mean error, but truth in the process of evolution." Later on he said to me, "Consider how in this war the ideas about the possibility of breaking through, for example, have changed. First it is thought possible; then they adopt the doctrine that the front line of defence is invulnerable; then that breaking through is possible but dangerous and that the objective must be destroyed before any advance is made (one cocksure journalist even wrote that it was the height of stupidity to maintain the opposite); then that, on the contrary, the attack should be made with very little artillery preparation; then they get to the point where they trace the theory of the invulnerability of the front line back to the War of 1870 and claim that it is incorrect for this present war, therefore correct in its time—incorrect in this war because of the greater massing of troops and the improvement in weapons of offence (see Bidou's article of July 2, 1918) changes which gave rise to the opinion, first that the next war would be very short, then that it would be very long, and finally revived belief in the possibility of a decisive victory. Bidou cites as examples the Allies on the Somme, and the Germans near Paris in 1918. In the same way at each German success people say, 'The lost ground does not matter, the towns captured do not matter; the important thing is to destroy the enemy's military power.' Then in

1918 the Germans in their turn take up this theory and Bidou at that time explains in a curious manner (July 2, 1918) how the capture of certain vital points, certain indispensable areas can decide the victory. But that's the way his mind works. He shewed how, if Russia was bottled up by sea, she would be beaten, and also that an army which is enclosed in a sort of prison camp is doomed to perish."

I should mention, however, that, even if war had not altered Saint-Loup's character, his mind, undergoing an evolution in which heredity played a large part, had acquired a keenness I had not known in him before What a difference between the blond young fellow who used to be sought after by all the women who were, or aspired to be, up-to-date, and the serious conversationalist and close reasoner who played continually with words. In another generation and on another branch of the family tree, much as an actor might revive a part formerly played by Bressant or Delaunay, he was, as it were, a successor to M. de Charlus—the former with his rosy cheeks, his light complexion and his golden hair, the latter wi [illegible] did not [illegible] the war, [illegible] tocracy which put France above everything, while M. de Charlus was at bottom a defeatist; he could shew to anyone who had not seen the actor who "created" the part how to excel in an argumentative rôle. "They say that Hindenburg is a revelation," I said to him. "An old one or one still to come," he retorted immediately. Instead of letting up on the enemy, he maintained, they ought to have let Mangin go ahead, and have crushed Austria and Germany and Europeanised Turkey, instead of Montenegrinising France. "But we will have the help of the United States," I objected. "Meanwhile, I see here nothing but the spectacle of Disunited States. Why not make larger concessions to Italy, through fear of unchristianising France?" "If your uncle Charlus should hear you!" I exclaimed. "While at bottom you would not be sorry if they should offend the

Pope a bit more, he thinks with despair of the harm that may be done to the throne of the Hapsburgs. And in that he says he is following the tradition of Talleyrand and the Congress of Vienna." "The day of the Congress of Vienna is past," he replied. "We must meet secret diplomacy with concrete diplomacy. My uncle is fundamentally an unregenerate monarchist, who could be made to swallow carps like Mme. Molé or scarps like Arthur Meyer, provided they were served up *à la Chambord*. He hates the tricolor so bitterly, I believe he would sooner fall in line behind the *bonnet rouge* rag, which he would in all good faith take to be the white flag of the Royalists." It is true, these remarks were merely witty and Saint-Loup was far from having the often profound originality of his uncle. But his disposition was as affable and charming as his uncle's was suspicious and jealous, and he had remained as rosy-cheeked and charming as at Balbec, under his shock of golden hair. The only thing in which his uncle would not have surpassed him was in that mental attitude of the Faubourg Saint-Germain which characterises even those who think they have rid themselves of it the most completely, and which gives them at once a silly self-satisfaction and a respect for intelligent men of humble origin, which really flourishes only among the nobility and which makes revolutions so unjust. Thanks to this combination of humility and pride, of acquired curiosity of mind and inborn sense of authority, M. de Charlus and Saint-Loup, by different routes and with opposite ideas, had become, one generation apart, intellectuals interested in every new idea and conversationalists who could not be silenced by any interruptions, so that a rather mediocre person, according to the frame of mind he happened to be in, might have found them either dazzlingly brilliant or unutterably tiresome.

I had walked along, turning over in my mind Saint-Loup's visit, and then made a sharp turn to go to Mme. Verdurin's; I had almost reached the Pont des Invalides. The street lamps, rather few in number on account of the Gothas, had

been lighted a little too soon, for the change to daylight-saving time had been determined on and fixed for the whole summer too early in the season, when night still came on rather quickly (just as furnaces are started up or extinguished at set dates) and above the city, illuminated for the night, there was still some daylight over a large part of the bluish sky—that sky that knew neither summer nor winter time schedules and ignored the fact that half-past eight was now half-past nine. Over all that part of the city which is dominated by the towers of the Trocadéro, the sky had the appearance of an immense turquoise-tinted sea which was slowly drawing back and already uncovering a long, faint line of black rocks, perhaps merely fishermen's nets hung side by side (in reality little clouds)—a now turquoise-coloured sea which, unknown to them, carries along with it the race of men, swept away in the immense revolution of the earth, that earth on which they are insane enough to continue their own revolutions and their vain and useless wars, like the one which was at that moment drenching France in blood. And then, as one gazed long at this indolent, too beauti[illegible]
above
lingeri
far-flung sea, but a vertical gradation of ice-blue glaciers. And the towers of the Trocadéro, which seemed so close to those huge, turquoise-coloured steps, were far removed from [illegible]

des Invalides, daylight had gone from the sky; there were [illegible]

which I had recently experienced came back to me, and in another sense a vision of the Paris of 1815 replaced that of

the Directoire. As in 1815, there was a motley procession of the uniforms of the allied troops; among them some Africans in baggy red trousers and some white-turbanned Hindus sufficed to enable me to make of this Paris where I was walking an entire exotic city of the imagination in an Orient at the same time minutely correct as far as the costumes and complexions were concerned, but arbitrarily fantastic in its setting, just as Carpaccio made out of the town he lived in a Jerusalem or a Constantinople merely by gathering together there a crowd whose marvellous medley of colours was no more variegated than what I now had before my eyes. Walking behind two Zouaves, who scarcely seemed to notice him, I perceived a tall, stout man in a soft hat and long ulster, whose purplish face made me hesitate whether he was a certain actor or a painter, both of whom had been involved in countless notorious cases of sodomy. As I was certain in any case that I did not know him, I was greatly surprised when his glance met mine and I noticed a look of embarrassment on his face as he stopped short and came toward me, like a man who wishes to shew you that you are quite mistaken in thinking you have caught him doing something he would have preferred to keep secret. Just for a second I wondered who was greeting me—it was M. de Charlus. One can say that in his case the evolution of his disease or the revolution of his vice had reached that extreme point where the small original portion of individuality, the inherited qualities, are wholly blocked and headed off by a besetting generic defect or malady. M. de Charlus had gotten as far away as possible from his real self—or, rather, his true self was so completely masked by what he had become (which was not peculiar to him alone but characterises many inverts) that at first sight I had taken him for another of them as he strolled along behind those Zouaves right out on the boulevard—for another invert who was not M. de Charlus, not a highborn gentleman, nor a man of imagination and intelligence, and who did not resemble the Baron in any way except by that appearance common to all

of them, which now concealed from sight everything else about him, at least until one looked very closely. That is how, wishing to call on Mme. Verdurin, I happened to meet M. de Charlus. And assuredly I would not have met him at her house, as in former times; the breach between them had grown still wider and Mme. Verdurin took advantage of existing conditions to discredit him still further. Having for a long time declared that he seemed to her played out, used up and more out-of-date in his affected audacity than the most oldfashioned person imaginable, she now summed up this criticism and turned all her listeners against him by saying that he was "terribly pre-war." According to the "little clan," the war had made a chasm between him and the present which relegated him to a past that was completely dead. In addition—and this was more for the benefit of men in politics, because they were less well informed—she represented him as being as much of a "back number" and as completely "out of it" socially as he was intellectually. "He sees nobody and is invited nowhere," she said to M. Bontemps, whom she found easy to convince. And, incidentally, there was some truth in these remarks. M. de Charlus's position certainly had changed. Caring less and less for society, having, because of his crabbed disposition, quarreled with most of those who made up the cream of society, and being too conscious of his social standing to condescend to a resumption of friendly relations, he lived in a [illegible]

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in the eyes of the public. M. de Charlus's unsavoury reputation, now widespread, caused uninformed persons to think that that was the reason why certain people did not call upon him, whereas actually he had of his own accord refused to associate with them, so that what was really the
of his morose character appeared to be an expression
contempt of those on whom he vented his ill
furthermore, Mme. de Villeparisis had had one

wark, the family, whereas M. de Charlus had multiplied the quarrels in that direction. Besides, especially on the old Faubourg, Courvoisier side, the family had seemed to him uninteresting And he who, in argument with the Courvoisiers, had said such daring things against art, little sus-

[illegible]

which his cousins from the Rue de la Chaise led in the Place du Palais-Bourbon or the Rue Garancière. And, coming down to a less ethereal and more practical point of view, Mme. Verdurin pretended to believe that M. de Charlus was not French "Just what nationality is he; isn't he Austrian?" M. Verdurin asked with an innocent air. "Oh, no, not at all!" the Comtesse Molé replied, her first impulse responding to common sense rather than malice. "No, he is Prussian," declared the "Mistress". "I assure you, I know it for a certainty. He told us often enough that he was a hereditary member of the House of Lords of Prussia and one of the higher nobility." "But the Queen of Naples once told me . . ." "You know she's an awful spy," exclaimed Mme. Verdurin, who had not forgotten the attitude which that dethroned sovereign had assumed one evening at her house. "I know it, and most positively, too. She made her living that way. If we had a more energetic government, all such folk ought to be in an internment camp, and good riddance! In any case, you would do well not to have that fine crowd calling on you, because I know that the Minister of the Interior has his eye on them and your house would be put under surveillance. Nothing will ever convince me that Charlus did not carry on a systematic espionage in my house for two years." And, perhaps thinking that people might feel some doubt as to what interest even the most detailed reports concerning the organisation of the "little clan" could possibly have for the German government, Mme. Verdurin added in a quietly subtle manner, well knowing that the importance of what she said would seem greater if she did not

raise her voice, "I assure you I said to my husband the very first day, 'I don't like the way that man has slipped into our circle, there's something shady about it.' We had a coun-

in the château; but no, he preferred to stay at Doncières, where there were a great many soldiers All that smelt to high heaven of espionage." As for the first of the accusations she launched at Baron de Charlus, that of being out-of-date, society folk were only too glad to agree with her. But, as a matter of fact, they were ingrates, for M. de Charlus was in a certain sense their poet; it was he who had been able to discover in the gay world about him a sort of poetry containing elements of history, beauty, picturesque-

scorn for society and, instead, preached advanced social and economic theories. M de Charlus loved to repeat accidentally lyrical remarks of the Duchesse de X and describe her ingeniously graceful gowns, speaking of her as a most charming woman, which made him appear rather weak-minded in the eyes of those society women who considered that the Duchesse de X was an uninteresting numskull and that dresses are made to be worn but not commented on, and who, more intelligent than the Duchess (in their own opinion, at least) flocked to the Sorbonne, or to the Chamber of Deputies if Deschanel was to speak. In short, society folk had lost their enthusiasm for M. de Charlus, not because they had seen through, but because they had never seen at all, his unusual intellectual qualities. They considered him "pre-war," out-of-date, because the very folk

who are the least fitted to judge of other people's qualities are the ones who are the most given to classifying people on the basis of what is fashionable at the moment; before they

new generation—which will not be understood any better than was the last one. As for the second charge, that of German sympathies, the "middle-of-the-road" psychology of society folk made them inclined to reject it, but it had found a tireless and particularly cruel sponsor in Morel, who had succeeded in retaining the standing with the press and even in society which M. de Charlus, with equal effort in each case, had been able to win for him but unable later to undermine; he persecuted the Baron with an implacable hatred, which was not only cruel of him, but doubly reprehensible, for, whatever had been his precise relations with the Baron, he had known a side that the latter hid from most people, his deep-seated kindness. M. de Charlus had acted toward the violinist with such generosity, such delicacy of feeling, and had been so scrupulously careful always to keep his word with him, that the impression Charlie had carried away was not at all that of a man of vicious habits (at the worst, he regarded the Baron's weakness as a disease) but of the most high-minded man he had ever known, a man of great tenderness, a sort of saint. He recognised this so fully that, even after they had become estranged, he used to say to parents in all sincerity, "You can trust your son to him; his influence over him will be only of the best." Therefore,

short *chroniques*, transparent for the "initiated," as they were called, began to do M. de Charlus great injury. Of one of them, entitled *The Misadventures of a Dowager in -us; or, The Last Years of the Baroness*, Mme. Verdurin bought fifty copies to lend around among her acquaintances,

and M. Verdurin used to read it aloud, declaring that even Voltaire did not write better than that. Since the beginning [illegible]

were the nicknames usually given him. One article of a poetic nature bore the title *Une Allemande,* borrowed from certain dance tunes by Beethoven. Finally, two short stories, *The Uncle from America and the Aunt from Frankfort* and *Hero of the Rear,* read in galley proof by the "little clan," rejoiced the heart of Brichot himself, who exclaimed, "Let's hope the all-high and all-powerful Anastasia does not use the blue pencil on us." The articles themselves were more subtle than these silly titles. Their style was patterned after Bergotte, but in a way that perhaps only I could detect, for the following reason. Bergotte's way of writing had not influenced Morel in the least. The fertilisation, so to speak, had come about in a very peculiar manner, so unusual that that is the only reason I mention it here. I have already described elsewhere Bergotte's peculiar way of choosing and pronouncing his words in conversation. Morel, who had associated with him over a long period of time, gave "impersonations" of him in which he imitated his voice perfectly and used the very same words Bergotte would have selected. And now Morel in these articles transcribed conversations in the Bergotte manner, but without subjecting them to the transpositions that would have made them resemble Bergotte's writings. As few people had ever talked with Bergotte, they did not recognise the tone of the articles, as it was different from his written style. This oral fertilisation is so unusual that I wanted to note it here. Incidentally, it produces only sterile blossoms.

Morel, who was in the publicity department and whose illegal military status was not known, made believe—his French blood boiling in his veins like the juice of the grapes of Combray—that he was not satisfied to stay in an office during the war, and pretended that he wanted to enlist

(when all he needed to do was to report for duty) while Mme. Verdurin did everything she could to persuade him to remain in Paris. It is true, she expressed indignation that M. de Cambremer at his age was attached to a regimental staff, and concerning every man who did not attend her receptions she would say, "And how did that fellow succeed in getting under cover?" And, if someone stated that "that fellow" had been in the front line from the very first day, she would reply, either lying brazenly or because she had fallen into the habit of making inaccurate statements, "Not a bit of it; he has not set foot outside Paris. He is doing something or other very dangerous, like driving a cabinet minister about. Take it from me; I assure you it is true. I was told this by someone who saw him." But it was very different for the "faithful"; she did not want to let them go to the front, considering the war "a great big bore" that made them abandon her. And so she used every possible means to have them stay in Paris, as this would give her the double pleasure of having them to dinner and, before they came or after they had gone, branding them as slackers. But still it was necessary that the "faithful" one lend a hand in this maneuvering to stay behind, and she was heart-broken to see Morel pretend to wish to "kick over the traces"; so she said to him, "You are mistaken; you are more useful in that office than you would be at the front. The essential thing is to be of service, to be really part of the war, to be of it and in it. On the one hand there are the men who are in it, and on the other there are the slackers. Very well, *you* are in it and don't worry, everybody knows it and nobody is throwing any stones at you." In like manner, but under different circumstances, although men were not so scarce at that time and she was not obliged, as now, to have principally women at her affairs, if one of the men lost his mother, she would not hesitate to urge that he could, without impropriety, continue to come to her receptions. "One carries his grief in his heart," she would argue. "Now, if you wanted to go to a dance"—she did not give

any herself "—I would be the first to advise you not to; but here, at my small Wednesday gatherings, or in a box at the theatre, no one would be offended. We all know you feel your sorrow deeply." But now the men were scarcer and mourning was more general; but the latter was not needed to keep men from going to social affairs, the war itself was enough. She tried to persuade them that they could be more useful to France by staying in Paris, just as she formerly would have assured them that the "dear departed one" would be happier to see them enjoying themselves. In spite of everything, however, she had very few men; perhaps she sometimes regretted that she had brought about a break with M. de Charlus that could not now be mended.

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amusement. At Mme. Verdurin's, for example, Cottard now [illegible]

Enfants de Marie. As for M. de Charlus, finding himself now in a city whence the grown men, who had until then been his preference, had disappeared, he did like some Frenchmen who have a fondness for women when in France, but who live in the colonies—he had, at first from necessity, become accustomed to, and then had developed a liking for, young boys.

But, as it turned out, the above-mentioned familiar feature of the Verdurin salon disappeared rather quickly, for Cottard soon died, "bravely facing the enemy," as the newspapers declared, although he had not stirred from Paris, but had, as a matter of fact, overworked himself, considering his age. He was shortly followed by M. Verdurin, whose death brought sorrow to only one person, namely—who would have believed it?—Elstir. I had been able to study the latter's work from a more or less detached point of view.

But he, especially as he grew older, superstitiously associated it with the fashionable world which had supplied him with his models and which, after having thus by the alchemy of subjective impressions been transformed through him into works of art, had furnished a public to admire them. More and more inclined to believe absolutely that a considerable part of beauty is inherent in the objects themselves, just as, at the beginning, he had worshipped in Mme. Elstir the somewhat heavy type of beauty which he had sought after and lovingly fondled in paintings and tapestries, so he saw disappear with M. Verdurin one of the last vestiges of the social setting—a setting as perishable, as ephemeral as the very styles in dress which constitute a part of it—which maintains an art and certifies to its authenticity, just as the French Revolution, in destroying the elegances of the eighteenth century, would have broken the heart of a painter of *fêtes galantes*, or as the disappearance of Montmartre and the Moulin de la Galette would have distressed Renoir. But he particularly saw disappear with M. Verdurin the eyes and brain which had most correctly grasped the meaning of his work and in which his work lived, as it were, like a cherished memory. It is true that a younger generation had come forward which loved painting, but a very different style of painting, and it had not, as had M. Swann and M. Verdurin, received lessons in good taste from Whistler and lessons in truth from Monet which might enable it to judge Elstir's work fairly. Therefore, upon the death of M. Verdurin, although they had been estranged for many years, he felt more alone than ever and it was for him as though a little of the beauty of his work had gone, together with a little of the appreciation of that beauty which still remained in the world.

As for the change which had taken place in M. de Charlus's form of enjoyment, it was intermittent. Keeping up an extensive correspondence with soldiers at the front, he did not suffer from any lack of fairly mature men on leave. In short, speaking generally, Mme. Verdurin continued to hold

her receptions and M. de Charlus continued to indulge his tastes as if nothing had changed. And yet for two years that immense human being called "France" (the colossal beauty of which, even from the purely material point of view, one does not feel unless one perceives the cohesion of the millions of individuals who, like multiform cells, crowd it full to its outermost perimeter, like so many minute interior polygons, and unless one views it on the same scale as a single cell or a microscopic organism would view a human being, namely, as huge as Mont Blanc) had been face-to-face in a gigantic collective quarrel with that other immense agglomeration of individuals, "Germany." In the days when I believed what people said, hearing first Germany, then Bulgaria and then Greece protest their peaceful intentions, I would have been tempted to have faith in their

I did not let any statement from William II, Ferdinand of Bulgaria or Constantine of Greece, however fair it seemed, mislead my intuitive understanding of what each of them was contriving. It is true that my quarrels with Françoise and Albertine had been merely private quarrels, which involved only the life of one little spiritual cell, namely, a human being. But, just as there are animal bodies and human bodies, that is to say, combinations of cells each of which, as compared with a single cell, is as big as a mountain, in the same way there are huge organised agglomerations of individuals, which are called "nations"; their existence simply repeats on an amplified scale the existence of the component cells, and whoever is unable to comprehend the mystery, the reactions and the laws of the latter, will utter only empty words when he comes to speak of struggles between nations. But if he has mastered the psychology of the individual, then these colossal masses of conglomerate individuals, lined up opposite one another, will take on his eyes a beauty more imposing than the struggle

springs merely from the conflict of two natures, and he will view them on the scale on which tiny organisms, so microscopic that ten thousand would not measure one cubic millimeter, would view the body of a man of great size. Just so for some time that great body, "France," filled to its perimeter with millions of multiform little polygons, and that other body, "Germany," filled with still more polygons, had been having a quarrel such as, to a certain extent, individuals have.

But the blows they exchanged were governed by the rules of that mass prize fighting the principles of which Saint-Loup had explained to me, and since, even considered from the point of view of the individual, they were gigantic aggregations, their quarrel assumed *immense, magnificent forms*, like the upheaving of an ocean of millions of waves which is endeavouring to break down an age-old line of cliffs; or like gigantic glaciers which seek with their slowly destructive oscillations to cut a path through the encircling ring of mountains. Notwithstanding all this, life went on almost unchanged for many persons who have figured in this narrative and particularly for M. de Charlus and the Verdurins, just as if the Germans had not been so near them, because a standing menace—although in this case, to be sure, the peril had now been removed—leaves us completely indifferent if we do not picture to ourselves what it really is. People usually go about their pleasures without ever reflecting that, if the etiolating and moderating influences should happen [illegible]

millimeter to a mass one million times larger than the sun, having at the same time destroyed all the oxygen and all the substances we live on, so that there would no longer be any human race or any animals or even any earth; nor do they reflect, on the other hand, that the mad, ceaseless activity hidden behind the apparent immutability of the sun might bring about an irremediable and entirely possible

catastrophe in the ether. They go about their business without giving a thought to either of these two worlds, one of them too minute, and the other too immense, for people to perceive the cosmic menaces they hold imminent all about us. In the same way, the Verdurins (and soon Mme Verdurin alone, after the death of her husband) gave dinner parties and M. de Charlus went about his pleasures, hardly realising that the Germans were within an hour's automobile ride of Paris—held in check, it is true, by a bloody barrier constantly renewed. But one might say the Verdurins were reminded of this because they had a political salon, where the situation, not only of the armies, but also of the fleets, was discussed every evening. They did, indeed, give a thought to the hecatombs of regiments annihilated, of passengers swallowed up by the sea, but, by two contrary operations, what concerns our well-being is multiplied, and what does not is divided, by a figure so enormous that the death of millions of people whom we do not know barely touches us, and almost less unpleasantly than a current of air. Mme. Verdurin, in distress at not being able to get any *croissants* to dip in her coffee to relieve her headaches, had obtained from Cottard a prescription permitting her to have them made for her in a certain restaurant we have mentioned. This had been almost as difficult to get out of the public authorities as the nomination of a general. Mme. Verdurin resumed her first *croissant* the morning when the newspapers were telling of the sinking of the *Lusitania.* While dipping the *croissant* in her coffee and giving her newspaper a fillip now and then so as to make it lie open without her having to interrupt the dipping process, she exclaimed, "How terrible! It is more awful than the most frightful catastrophes!" But the drowning of all those people must have impressed her with only the millionth part of its real horror, because, even while making these deeply grieved comments with her mouth full of *croissant* and coffee, an expression of sweet contentment suffused her face, due

probably to the pleasing savour of the *croissant*, so effective against headaches.

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M. de Charlus went further than merely failing to desire ardently to see France victorious; without admitting it to himself, he wished, if not that Germany should triumph, at least that she should not be crushed, as everybody else was hoping would happen. The reason for this was that in these quarrels the great groupings of individuals called "nations" behave to a certain degree like individuals themselves. The reasoning that guides them is entirely subjective and is being continually modified by their passions, as in the case of people at odds in a lovers' quarrel or a domestic dispute, such as a son's disagreement with his father, or that of a cook with her mistress or a wife with her husband. The nation that is in the wrong nevertheless believes that it is in the right—as was the case with Germany—and the nation that is in the right sometimes advances arguments in support of its claims which it considers unanswerable only because they are in accordance with its passions. In quarrels between individuals, in order to be absolutely convinced that one or the other party is in the right, the surest way is to be that party himself; an onlooker will never uphold him as completely. Now, in a nation the individual, if he is really a part of the nation, is only one cell in the larger individual, the nation. Misleading people by propaganda is a meaningless phrase. If you had told the French that they were going to be defeated, not one of them but would have been as heartbroken as if you had told him that he was himself going to be killed by the Big Berthas. The real misleading propaganda is practiced on oneself through that hopefulness which is a sort of instinct of self-preservation in a nation—if one is really a live part of that nation. In order to be blind to what was unjust in the cause of that composite individual, Germany, or to recognise at all times what was just in the cause of that other composite individual, France, the surest way was not for a German

to lose his reason or for a Frenchman to keep his, but for each of them to be patriotic. M. de Charlus had rare qualities of character and was capable of pity, generosity, affection, devotion but, on the other hand, had no patriotism, for a number of reasons, among which the fact of having had a Bavarian duchess for a mother may have played its part. He was consequently one of the body cells of both France and Germany. If I had been devoid of patriotism, instead of feeling myself to be one of the body cells of France, it seems to me that my way of looking at the quarrel would not have been the same as it might formerly have been. In my youth, when I believed whatever I was told, if I had heard the German government protest its good faith, I would doubtless have been tempted not to question it, but I had now for a long time known that our thoughts do not always agree with our words.

But after all, I can only surmise what I would have done if I had not been actively involved, if I had not been part of the active participant, France, just as, in my quarrels with Albertine, when my sad expression and the clutch at my throat were part of my personality passionately interested in my cause, I could not achieve detachment. M. de Charlus's detachment, however, was complete. Consequently, from the moment he became only an onlooker, everything was bound to lead him to be a German sympathiser, by reason of his living in France without being really French. He was very keen-witted; in every country the fools are the most numerous; there is no doubt that, had he lived in Germany, he would have been exasperated by the fools in that country defending an unjust cause with foolishness and passion; but, living in France, the French fools defending a just cause with foolishness and passion exasperated him quite as much. The logic of passion, even in the service of the most righteous cause, can always be refuted by a man who remains dispassionate. M. de Charlus exposed subtly every illogical argument of the patriots. The smug satisfaction that an imbecile takes in the justice

of his cause and the certainty of victory are peculiarly irritating. M. de Charlus was irritated by the triumphant optimism of people who did not know Germany and her strength as he did, who believed each month that the next month would see her completely crushed, and a year later made a fresh prophecy with not a whit less confidence, as if they had not already, with just as much assurance, made other false prophecies, which, however, they had entirely forgotten and which, if cited to them, they would dismiss with the explanation, "That was something quite different." Now, M. de Charlus, although he was by no means shallow-minded, might perhaps not have understood in the field of art that the critics of Monet exhibited the same mental twist when they replied, "It is not the same thing at all" to those who reminded them that the same things had been said about Delacroix. And finally, M. de Charlus was compassionate; the idea of anyone being conquered pained him; he always favoured the weaker party; he did not read the reports of trials in order not to have to suffer in his own flesh and blood the agony of the condemned man and the torture of being unable to assassinate the judge, the hangman and the crowd, overjoyed to see that "justice has been done." He was sure in any case that France could no longer be conquered and, on the other hand, he knew that the Germans were suffering from hunger and would be obliged one day or another to surrender unconditionally. And this idea, too, was made more disagreeable for him by the fact that he was living in France His recollections of Germany were, after all, remote, whereas the Frenchmen who were talking of crushing Germany with a glee that was offensive to him were folk whose failings were well known to him and their very faces repugnant. In such cases, we feel more sympathy for those we do not know and whom we can only picture in imagination than for those who are very close to us in the cheapening contact of daily life (unless, of course, we are ourselves part of them and one with them); patriotism performs this miracle, that we are as passionate for our

country as we are for ourselves in a lovers' quarrel. Thus the war was for M. de Charlus a culture extraordinarily productive of those hatreds which in him sprang up in an instant and lasted only a very short while, but made him for the time being ready to go to any violent extremes. As he read the newspapers, the triumphant air of the editors, daily representing Germany as being at a low ebb, "The Beast at bay; reduced to impotence," whereas the very opposite was only too true, made him wild with rage over their jaunty, ferocious stupidity. The newspapers were at that time edited partly by well known men who found therein a way of "doing their bit," men like Brichot, Norpois, Legrandin. M. de Charlus would dream of meeting them and crushing them with bitterest sarcasm. Always specially well informed along that line, he was familiar with the irregular sexual habits of many a man who, thinking they were not kno

the failings in

tory empires,"

desire to meet

own vice before the whole world and leave these insulters of a beaten enemy disgraced and gasping And finally, M. de Charlus had still other reasons, of a more special nature, for being the Germanophile he was One was that, a well bred man himself, he had lived a great deal among well bred men, upright men, men of honour, who will not shake hands with a scoundrel, he knew their high and uncompromising standards; he knew them to be unmoved by the tears of a man whom they expel from their club or with whom they refuse to fight a duel, even though their act of moral integrity should cost the life of the mother of the black sheep. In spite of himself and notwithstanding his admiration for England, that same England, impeccable and incapable of a lie but nevertheless preventing milk and wheat from entering Germany, was in a way that nation of men of honour, of certificated witnesses, of judges of *affaires d'honneur;* whereas he knew that vicious and rascally per-

sons can have their better side, like certain characters in Dostoievsky, and I could never understand why he put the Germans in the same category, their lying and trickery not necessarily implying also kind-heartedness, which they do not seem to have displayed. And lastly, a final trait will complete this analysis of M. de Charlus's pro-Germanism. It could be traced, through a very strange reaction, to his "Charlism." He considered the Germans very homely, perhaps because they were too nearly of his own flesh and blood. He was infatuated with Moroccans, but especially with Anglo-Saxons, who were to him like living statues by Phidias. Now, in him sexual pleasure was accompanied by a certain cruel idea, the full force of which I did not realise at that time—the man he loved seemed to him like an adorable hangman. If he had taken sides against the Germans, he would have thought he was acting as he did only in moments of voluptuous passion, namely, contrary to his kindly nature, in other words, inflamed with passion for seductive vice and trampling on homely virtue. It was the same also when Rasputin was murdered (a murder in which, by the way, people were surprised to find such a stamp of Russian colour) at a supper *à la* Dostoievsky—an impression which would have been much stronger still if the public had known about the whole affair what M. de Charlus knew so well—because life disappoints us so much that in the end we come to believe that literature has no relation to it and we are dumbfounded to see that the precious ideas we found in books are spread right out before us in everyday life, naturally and freely, without fear of being spoiled by handling, and that a supper, a murder—a Russian incident—have something truly Russian about them.

The war was dragging on interminably and the people who had announced some years before, "on the best authority," that peace negotiations had begun, even specifying the clauses of the peace treaty, did not take the trouble any more, when they talked with you, to make excuses for their

inaccurate information. They had forgotten all about it and were ready to do the same thing over again, in all sincerity —and then forget about it just as quickly. It was the period when there were constant Gotha raids; the air hummed continually with the watchful, noisy vibrations of the French airplanes. But sometimes the siren would rend the air, like the shrieking call of a Valkyrie—the only German music heard since the beginning of the war—until the firemen announced that the danger was over and at the same time, like some invisible street urchin, the *berloque* made a sort of running commentary on the good news, launching its joyous cry into the air at regular intervals.

M. de Charlus was surprised to see that even men like Brichot, who had been militarists before the war and had blamed France, especially, for her lukewarmness in this respect, now criticised Germany not only for her exaggerated militarism but even for her admiration for the army. It is true, they changed their tune at once when it was a question of letting up a bit on the war against Germany, and they denounced the pacifists with good reason. But, for example, Brichot, having consented, in spite of his failing eyesight, to give some lectures on certain books that had appeared in the neutral countries, praised to the skies a Swiss novel in which the author ridiculed as sowing the seed of militarism, a representation of two children falling in symbolic admiration before a dragoon. There were additional reasons why this mockery should have displeased M. de Charlus, who considered that a dragoon can be a very handsome object. But what he especially could not understand was Brichot's admiration, if not of the book (which the Baron had not read) at any rate of its spirit, so different from that which had animated Brichot before the war. At that time, anything a military man did was good, even the questionable acts of General de Boisdeffre, the falsifications and machinations of Colonel Du Paty de Clam, the forgery of Colonel Henry. By what extraordinary right-about-face (in reality it was only another aspect of the very noble passion of

patriotism which, militarist when struggling against Dreyfusism with its anti-militarist tendencies, was forced to become almost anti-militarist itself, now that it was struggling against super-militarist Germania) did Brichot exclaim, "Oh, what a marvellously beautiful spectacle, worthy of attracting the attention of the youth of a century entirely given over to brutality and worshipping nothing but violence—a dragoon! One can just imagine the generation of worthless bashi-bazouks that will grow up under the cult of such manifestations of brute force!" "I declare!" M de Charlus once exclaimed to me. "You know Brichot and Cambremer. Well, every time I see them, they talk to me about Germany's extraordinary ignorance of psychology. Now, between ourselves, do you think that until now they themselves had paid much attention to that subject and that even today they are capable of shewing an understanding of it? And yet, believe me, I do not exaggerate when I say that, even when speaking of the greatest German—Nietzsche, or Goethe—you will hear Brichot say, 'with the usual ignorance of psychology which characterises the Teutonic race.' Obviously, there are things in war that grieve me more, but you will agree that this is exasperating Norpois is more intelligent, I admit, although he has been consistently wrong from the very beginning. But how can you explain it that these articles arouse universal admiration? My dear sir, you know as well as I what Brichot really amounts to; I like him very much, even since the schism which has cut me off from his little sect and because of which I see him much less often. Even so, I have a certain regard for this high-school principal, very well educated and a good talker, and I admit it is pathetic that, at his age and losing ground as he has been doing noticeably for some years past, he should have gone and 'reënlisted', as he puts it. But, after all, good intentions are one thing and talent is another and Brichot was never talented. I admit that I share his admiration for certain things about the present war that are really great. It is strange, to say the least, that a blind

or at Goncourt for ranking Diderot above Homer, and Watteau above Raphael—should repeat to us incessantly that Thermopylæ and even Austerlitz were nothing compared with Vauquois. This time, moreover, the public, which had resisted the modernists in literature and art, follows them in war, because it's the fashion to think thus and also because small minds are overwhelmed, not by the beauty, but by the immensity of the action. 'Kolossal' is now written only with a 'k', but at bottom it is the colossal everybody is bowing down to.

"It's a strange thing, moreover," M. de Charlus added in the sharp little voice he sometimes assumed. "I hear folk who look very happy all day long, and who drink excellent cocktails, declare that they will never be able to go through with this war, that their hearts will never stand it that they can think of nothing else, that they will die suddenly some day—and the most extraordinary thing about it is that this actually does happen! How strange it is! Is it a case of faulty nutrition due to their taking into their stomachs only poorly prepared food, or because, in order to prove their devotion, they yoke themselves to useless tasks which interfere with the special diet that was keeping them alive? However that may be, I note a surprising number of these strange premature deaths—premature, at any rate, as far as the wishes of the deceased were concerned. I have forgotten what I started to tell you—that Brichot and Norpois admired this war, but what a peculiar way they have of speaking of it! In the first place, have you noticed the rapidly increasing number of new expressions Norpois employs, which, when they finally wear out through being used every day—for, really, he is tireless and I think the death of my Aunt Villeparisis must have rejuvenated him—are immediately replaced by other commonplace terms? I remember that you used to be amused to note these styles in

language which spring up, last awhile and then disappear, such as, 'He who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind', 'The dogs may bark; the caravan moves on', '"Give me a good policy and I will give you good finances," said Baron Louis.' There are some symptoms which it would be an exaggeration to take tragically but which it is right to take seriously, such as 'Working for the King of Prussia.' (This one, by the way, has been revived, as was inevitable.) Well, since then, alas, how many have I seen die! We have had the 'scrap of paper', the 'predatory empires', the famous 'Kultur', which consists in '*assassinating defenceless women and children*', 'Victory is on the side that can hold out a quarter of an hour longer than the other, as the Japanese say', the 'Germano-Turanians', 'scientific barbarity'—'if we wish to win the war', to quote Mr. Lloyd George's strong expression—in short, there is no end to them, and then there's the 'keen fighting edge of our troops' and their 'grit.' Even the syntax of our good friend Norpois is undergoing, by reason of the war, a change as profound as has occurred in the way of making bread or the speed of railroad traffic. Have you noticed that the good man, eager to announce his wishes as if they were truths just about to become reality, does not dare, however, use the simple future tense, which might be contradicted by subsequent events, so he has adopted the expression 'be capable of' as a sign of this tense?" I had to admit to M. de Charlus that I did not understand very well what he meant. (I ought to note here that the Duc de Guermantes did not at all share his brother's pessimism. Besides which, he was as much of an Anglophile as M. de Charlus was an Anglophobe. And finally, he regarded M. Caillaux as a traitor who deserved a thousand times over to be shot. When his brother asked for proofs of this treason, M. de Guermantes replied that, if only the people who sign a paper saying "I have been a traitor" were to be convicted, the crime of treason would never be punished. But in case I might not have an opportunity to revert to this subject later, I will note here

also that, two years later, the Duc de Guermantes, still under the influence of the most pronounced anti-Caillautism, met an English military attaché and his wife, a remarkably well read couple, with whom he became friendly—as with the three charming ladies at the time of the Dreyfus case—and that the very first day, speaking of Caillaux, whose conviction he deemed certain and his guilt obvious, he was dumbfounded to hear the charming, cultured couple say, "But he will probably be acquitted; there is absolutely nothing against him." M. de Guermantes tried to argue that M. de Norpois in testifying had said, with his eyes fixed on the terrified Caillaux, "You are the Giolitti of France; yes, monsieur Caillaux, you are the Giolitti of France." But the charming couple smiled, made fun of M. de Norpois, cited instances of his senile idiocy and concluded that he had made that remark before a M. Caillaux who was "terrified" in the columns of *Le Figaro* but who in real life had smiled sardonically. The Duc de Guermantes was not slow

guilty persons. But they, too, were soon to change their opinion and approve every decision that might cause sorrow to France and give aid and comfort to Germany.) But to come back to M. de Charlus. "Oh yes, you do," he said, in reply to my statement that I did not understand what he referred to. "In Norpois's articles 'be capable of' is the sign of the future tense, that is to say, the sign of his wishes—and, be it said, of all of us," he added, perhaps not with entire sincerity. "It is easy to see that, if 'be capable of' had not become simply the sign of the future tense, one might, strictly speaking, consider a country as the subject of this verb, as, for example, every time Brichot* says, 'America would not be capable of remaining indifferent to

*This appears to be an error for Norpois —*F.A.B.*

these repeated violations of right', 'The bicephalous monarchy would not be capable of not repenting and mending its ways.' It is clear that such statements express Norpois's wishes (as, also, mine* and yours) but, after all, there the expression may still retain its original meaning, for a country can be 'capable', America can be 'capable', even the 'bicephalous' monarchy can be 'capable' (in spite of the eternal ignorance of psychology) but there can no longer be any uncertainty when Brichot† writes, 'These systematic devastations would not be capable of persuading the neutral countries', 'The lake region would not be capable of failing to fall into the hands of the Allies within a very short time', 'The results of these neutralist elections would not be capable of reflecting the opinion of the great majority of the citizens.' Now, it is certain that these devastations, regions and election results are inanimate things that cannot be 'capable'. By means of this formula Norpois simply lays upon the neutral countries the injunction (which I regret to note they do not seem to have any intention of heeding) to abandon their neutrality and he enjoins upon the lake region not to remain any longer in the hands of the Boches." (M. de Charlus put the same sort of daring into uttering the word "Boche" as formerly, in the Balbec train, into speaking of [illegible] whose [illegible] ve you [illegible] ins his articles addressed to the neutral countries? He commences by declaring that, of course, France has no right to seek to influence the policy of Italy or Rumania or Bulgaria, etc. It is for these countries alone, in entire independence and consulting only the national interests, to decide whether they should abandon their neutrality or not. But if these initial declarations of the article (what would formerly have been called 'the exordium') are so very fine and disinterested, the section that follows is usually much less so. 'However,'

* In the French text, *siens* would seem to be a misprint for *miens*. Note the end of the second sentence preceding.—*F. A. B.*

† This appears to be an error for Norpois.—*F. A. B.*

Norpois goes on to say in substance, 'it is very clear that only the nations that have lined up on the side of Right and Justice will derive a material benefit from the struggle. It is not to be expected that the countries which, following the policy of minimum exertion, have not put their swords at the service of the Allies will be rewarded by the latter with the gift of former territories of theirs, in which their oppressed brethren have for centuries been crying for deliverance.' Having taken this first step toward counselling their entering the war, nothing any longer stops Norpois; it is now not only on the fundamental question of going in, but regarding the date for doing so that he gives advice in a more and more undisguised manner. 'Most assuredly,' he declares, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, to use one of his own favourite expressions, 'it is for Italy and Rumania alone to decide the suitable time and proper manner for them to intervene. However, they surely know that, if they hesitate too long, they run the risk of missing the opportunity altogether. Already Germania at bay is trembling with indescribable terror at the sound of the approaching hoofbeats of the Russian cavalry. It is obvious that the nations that lend a hand only when the resplendent dawn of victory is already visible, will by no means be entitled to the reward which they can still obtain if they make haste,' etc. Just as in the theatre they say, 'The last remaining seats will be snapped up very quickly; therefore it is well to act promptly.' This line of reasoning is all the more stupid since Norpois repeats it every six months and says periodically to Rumania, 'The hour has come for Rumania to make up her mind whether or not she wishes to realise her national aspirations. If she delays any longer, she may find that it is too late.' Now, in the two years that he has been saying this, the 'too late' has never come, but they are steadily increasing the reward offered to Rumania. In like manner he invites France, etc, to intervene against Greece, in her capacity of protecting power, on the ground that the treaty binding Greece to Serbia has not been lived up to. Now, tell

these repeated violations of right', 'The bicephalous mon-archy would not be capable of not repenting and mending its ways.' It is clear that such statements express Norpois's wishes (as, also, mine * and yours) but, after all, there the expression may still retain its original meaning, for a country can be 'capable', America can be 'capable', even the 'bicephalous' monarchy can be 'capable' (in spite of the eternal ignorance of psychology) but there can no longer be any uncertainty when Brichot † writes, 'These systematic devastations would not be capable of persuading the neutral countries', 'The lake region would not be capable of failing to fall into the hands of the Allies within a very short time', 'The results of these neutralist elections would not be capable of reflecting the opinion of the great majority of the citizens.' Now, it is certain that these devastations, regions and election results are inanimate things that cannot be 'capable'. By means of this formula Norpois simply lays upon the neutral countries the injunction (which I regret to note they do not seem to have any intention of heeding) to abandon their neutrality and he enjoins upon the lake region not to remain any longer in the hands of the Boches." (M. de Charlus put the same sort of daring into uttering the word "Boche" as formerly, in the Balbec train, into speaking of men whose taste does not run to women.) "Furthermore, have you noticed how craftily, ever since 1914, Norpois begins his articles addressed to the neutral countries? He commences by declaring that, of course, France has no right to seek to influence the policy of Italy or Rumania or Bul[illegible]
It is for these countries alone, in entire [illegible]
consulting only the national interests, to [illegible]
should abandon their neutrality or [illegible]
declarations of the article [illegible]
called 'the exordium') [illegible]
the section [illegible]

* In the [illegible]

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Norpois [illegible]

Rumania [illegible]

mind whether or not she wishes to realise her national aspirations. If she delays any longer, she may find that it is too late.' Now, in the two years that he has been saying this, the 'too late' has never come, but they are steadily increasing the reward offered to Rumania. In like manner he invites France, etc., to intervene against Greece, in her capacity of protecting power, on the ground that the treaty binding Greece to Serbia has not been lived up to. Now, tell—

me in all good faith, if France were not at war and anxious to obtain the cooperation or, at least, the neutrality of Greece, would it ever occur to her to intervene 'in her capacity of protecting power', and does not the moral indignation which stirs her blood when Greece fails to fulfil her obligations toward Serbia die down the moment it is a question of equally flagrant treaty violations by Italy and Rumania, which countries (and with good reason, I think, just as in the case of Greece) have not fulfilled their duties—neither so binding nor so extensive as people think—as allies of Germany? The fact is, people see everything through the eyes of their favourite newspaper—and how could they do otherwise when they have no personal knowledge of the persons or events involved? In the days of that case which aroused people's passions in such strange ways during a period from which it is now the fashion to say we are separated by centuries (for the war-philosophers have established the theory that all the ties that bound us to the past have been severed) I used to be shocked to see members of my family esteem very highly anti-clericals, ex-communards, whom their newspaper represented to be anti-Dreyfusards, while they denounced a general who was a Catholic and of a good family, but a revisionist. I am just as shocked now to see the entire French nation reviling Emperor Franz Josef, for whom they used to entertain the highest respect—and they had good reason to do so, let me tell you, for I have known him well and he calls me his cousin. Ah, I haven't written to him since the war began," he added, as if bravely confessing a fault which he knew very well nobody would blame him for. "Oh yes, I did, the first year, but only once. But I can't help it, that doesn't lessen my respect for him at all; only here I have many young relatives fighting in our army who, I know, would consider it very wrong that I should keep up regular correspondence with the head of a nation with which we are at war. So what could I do?" he asked, as if inviting my censure. "Let anyone blame me who wants to. I did not wish a letter signed 'Charlus'

to arrive in Vienna at this time. The principal criticism I have to make of the venerable sovereign is that a nobleman of his rank, head of one of the most ancient and illustrious houses in Europe, should have allowed himself to be led around by that little country squire—very intelligent, I admit, but, after all, merely a *parvenu*—namely, Wilhelm von Hohenzollern. That is not one of the least shocking anomalies of this war." And since M. de Charlus always descended to the most extraordinarily childish comments as soon as he resumed the aristocratic point of view—which, in the final analysis, dominated everything in his social philosophy—he told me, in the same tone as he would have spoken of the Marne or Verdun, that there were some important and very curious things that should not be omitted by anyone who might write the history of this war. "Thus, for example," he said, "everybody is so ignorant that no one has called attention to this striking fact, that the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, who is a pure-blooded Boche, nevertheless continues to live in Rome, where, in his capacity of Grand Master of our order, he enjoys the privilege of extraterritoriality. Now, that's interesting to know," he added, as if to say, "You see, you've not wasted your evening by running into me." I thanked him for this valuable information and he assumed the deprecatory air of someone who does not wish to be paid for his services. "What was I talking to you about? Oh yes, that people now hate Franz Josef, following the lead of their newspaper. In the case of King Constantine of Greece and the Czar of Bulgaria, the public has swung back and forth between hostility and friendliness, according as they were told that these sovereigns were going to side with the Entente or with what Norpois calls 'the Central Empires'. It's like when he keeps on repeating that 'Venizelos's hour is about to strike.' I have no doubt that M. Venizelos is a statesman of great ability, but how do we know that he is wanted as badly as that? They tell us that he wished Greece to carry out her agreement with Serbia, but first one would have to know

what that agreement was and whether it was more extensive than those that Italy and Rumania thought they could safely break. We are concerned about Greece executing her treaties and respecting her constitution in a way we certainly would not be if this were not to our interest. If there had been no war, do you think that the 'guaranteeing' powers would even have noticed the dissolution of the parliamentary bodies? I see that they are simply taking the props out from under the King of Greece one by one, so as to be able to throw him out or lock him up as soon as he no longer has an army to defend him. I said a moment ago that the public forms its opinion of the King of Greece and the Czar of the Bulgarians only according to the newspapers. But how could they have any idea of them except through the newspapers, since they do not know the gentlemen? Now I, on the contrary, have seen a great deal of them; I knew Constantine of Greece well when he was the heir apparent, and a marvellously beautiful lad he was. I have always thought that Emperor Nicholas had a great weakness for him—of a perfectly respectable character, of course, although Princess Christian used to talk about this quite openly, but then, she is an evil-tongued vixen. As for the Bulgarian Czar, he's a shrewd hussy, a regular wench, but very intelligent—altogether a remarkable man. He is very fond of me."

M. de Charlus could be delightful company, but he was detestable when he got on this kind of subject. He brought to it that self-satisfaction which is so irritating in a sick person who boasts of his good health. I have often thought that "the faithful" who, on the narrow-gauge railway of Balbec, were so eager to obtain the admissions he avoided making, would not have been able to endure this way of

. . . .

they would so much like to hear. Besides, people were

tired of hearing everybody accused—and probably very often without any kind of proof—by a man who left himself out of the special category in which he was so pleased to put others and where everybody knew he himself belonged. Finally, intelligent though he was, he had built up for himself in this regard a narrow little philosophy (at the base of which there was, perhaps, a suggestion of the curiosities that Swann found in "life") which explained everything by these special causes and in which, as always when one gives way to his own particular weakness, M. de Charlus was not only unworthy of himself, but peculiarly satisfied with himself. That is why he, so serious and dignified, would end a remark like the following with the most idiotic simper: "Since there are strong presumptions regarding Emperor William similar to those concerning Ferdinand of Coburg, that might well be the reason why Czar Ferdinand has lined up on the side of the 'predatory empires'. After all, at bottom, it's easy to understand, one is indulgent with a *sister* and doesn't refuse her anything. I think that that would be a very pretty explanation of the alliance of Bulgaria with Germany." And M. de Charlus laughed long over this stupid explanation, as if he really thought it very ingenious, whereas, even if it had been based on facts, it was as childish as the observations on the war which he made as a feudalist or in his capacity of Knight of Saint John of Jerusalem. He ended, however, with a very true comment: "The surprising thing is that this public which judges men and war questions only through its newspapers is convinced that it is doing its own thinking." In that he was right. I have been told that it was edifying to see Mme. de Forcheville hesitate a moment in silence (as one is obliged to do before expressing or even formulating a personal opinion) and then announce, with the air of an intimate confidence, "No, I do not think they will capture Warsaw", "It does not seem to me they can hold out through a second winter", "The one thing I do not want is an inconclusive peace", "What I am uneasy about, if

you want to know, is the Chamber of Deputies", "On the contrary, it is my opinion that they might break through." And, in saying that, Odette would assume a mincing air, which she carried to the extreme when she said, "I don't say the German armies do not fight well, but they lack 'grit'." In saying "grit" (and even merely "keen fighting edge") she made a gesture with her hand as if she were kneading dough and squinted her eyes the way young art students do when they employ a studio idiom. Her own way of speaking, however, shewed even more plainly than before her admiration for the English, whom she no longer had to be satisfied, as formerly, to call "our neighbours from across the Channel" or, at best, "our friends the English," but now "our loyal allies!" Needless to say, she did not fail to use the expression "fair play" in every possible connexion, to shew the English discovering the Germans to be unsportsmanlike, and also, "The one thing needed is to win the war, as our allies say." Worst of all, she would drag in her son-in-law's name rather clumsily in connexion with everything having to do with the English and tell how much he was enjoying living on intimate terms with the Australians, as well as the Scottish, the New Zealanders and the Canadians. "My son-in-law, Saint-Loup, now knows the slang of all the brave 'Tommies'; he can make himself understood by men from the most distant 'dominions' and fraternises with the humblest private as well as with the general in command of the base."

This digression about Mme. de Forcheville gives me an excuse (while I walk along the boulevards side by side with M. de Charlus) to introduce another, even longer but useful in describing this period, concerning the relations between Mme. Verdurin and Brichot. The fact is, if poor Brichot was, like Norpois, judged mercilessly by M. de Charlus (because the latter was very keen and also more or less unconsciously a Germanophile) he was still more harshly treated by the Verdurins. It is true, they were rabidly patriotic and this should have made them take pleasure in

Brichot's articles, which, be it said, were by no means inferior to many writings that Mme. Verdurin delighted in. But in the first place, the reader will perhaps recall that already at La Raspelière, Brichot, whom the Verdurins had previously regarded as a great man, had become for them, if not a general butt of ridicule like Saniette, at any rate the object of their poorly disguised derision. Nevertheless, he was still at that time a "faithful" among "the faithful" and this assured him a share in the advantages guaranteed by the by-laws to all the charter members of the "little group." But as, little by little—perhaps under the influence of the war conditions or maybe through the rapid crystallising of a long retarded elegance, all the necessary but hitherto invisible elements of which had for a long time been permeating the Verdurins' salon—the latter had opened its doors to a new set of visitors and "the faithful," at first decoys for this new set, finally came to be invited less and [illegible] took place in the case of Brichot [illegible]

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he made no effort to conceal, whatever the humorous forms in which he cloaked it—the "upper crust" was literally dazzled. For once, be it said, it gave its approval to someone who was far from being a nonentity and who could hold the attention by his fecund intelligence and his well stocked memory. And while three duchesses went to spend the evening at Mme. Verdurin's, three others vied with one another for the honour of having the great man at their dinner table. And M Brichot felt himself all the more at liberty to accept, since Mme. Verdurin, infuriated over the success his articles were meeting with in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, took care never to have Brichot at her house,

when there was to be present some brilliant person whom he had not yet met and who would hasten to try to draw him away. It was thus that journalism, in which Brichot, somewhat late in life, was satisfied to expend, with honour to himself and in return for a princely remuneration, what he had been squandering all his life, gratis and incognito, in the Verdurins' salon (for he had such a fund of knowledge and such an easy flow of words that his writing cost him scarcely any more effort than his conversation) would have led—and seemed at one time to be leading—Brichot to a position of undisputed glory—had it not been for Mme. Verdurin. It is true, Brichot's articles were far from being as remarkable as society people thought. The lack of refinement of the man shewed continually through the pedantry of the scholar. And alongside utterly meaningless figures of speech ("The Germans will never again be able to look Beethoven's statue in the face", "Schiller must have shuddered in his tomb", "The ink that had subscribed to the neutrality of Belgium was scarcely dry", "Lenin is whistling down the wind from off the steppes") there were cheap trivialities like "Twenty thousand prisoners—that's some figure!" "Our general staff will know how to keep its weather eye open", "We are determined to win and that's all there is to it." But along with all that, so much knowledge, such intelligence, such sound reasoning! Mme. Verdurin never began one of Brichot's articles without getting an anticipatory pleasure out of thinking of the absurd things she was going to find in it and she would read it with the closest attention in order to be sure not to let any of them escape her. Now, it was unfortunately certain that there would be some absurdities. But folk did not wait to find them. The most felicitous quotation from an author really little known—at any rate, through the book M. Brichot was discussing—was pounced upon as an evidence of the most intolerable pedantry, and Mme. Verdurin would impatiently await the dinner hour in order to set off her guests in peals of laughter. "Well, what did you think of Brichot this eve-

ning? I thought of you as I read the quotation from Cuvier. Upon my word, I think the man is losing his mind." "I haven't read the article yet," said one of "the faithful." "What! you haven't read it yet! You have no idea of the joy you are depriving yourself of. It is absurd enough to make one die of laughter." And, secretly glad someone had not read the Brichot article, which gave her an opportunity to shew up its ridiculous passages, Mme. Verdurin would tell the butler to bring *Le Temps* and she would herself read the article aloud, giving a bombastic sonority to even the simplest sentences. After dinner, this anti-Brichot campaign would go on for the whole evening, but with insincere reservations. "I am not speaking very loud because I am afraid that over there," she would say, pointing to the Comtesse de Molé, "there is someone who admires him a lot. Society folk are more naïve than people think." Mme. Molé, to whom they sought, by speaking rather loud, to convey the idea that they were talking about her, while at the same time, by lowering their voices, they tried to give the impression that they would not have liked her to hear them, cowardly repudiated Brichot, whom she really considered the equal of Michelet. She expressed agreement with Mme. Verdurin but, to end up with something that seemed to her undeniable, she added, "But there's one thing you've got to admit and that is that it's well written." "You call that well written?" exclaimed Mme. Verdurin. "For my part, I think it reads as if it had been written by a *cochon*"—a daring remark that made those elegant folk laugh, especially since Mme. Verdurin, startled
a bit herself at tl [illegible] had whispered it, holding
her hand before h [illegible]
creased by the la [illegible]
tion he felt over [illegible]
of ill humour when the censor—as he expressed it, with his
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lightened a more discerning man, shew too clearly how little she thought of his writings. Just once she criticised him for using "I" so often. For he did, it is true, have a way of using it all the time, in the first place, because, as a professor, he was accustomed to employing constantly expressions such as "I grant that", "I will admit that the tremendous extension of the military fronts requires", etc., but more particularly because, as a former militant anti-Dreyfusard who had instinctively sensed the Germanic military preparation long before the war, he found himself writing very often, "I have been exposing ever since 1897", "I called attention in 1901 to", "I warned in my little pamphlet which is to-day out of print and very hard to obtain (*habent sua fata libelli*)"; and then the habit had stuck to him. He blushed deeply at Mme Verdurin's remark, which was made in a cutting tone. "You are quite right, Madame," he replied. "Even a man who loved the Jesuits as little as did M. Combes—though he could not hold a candle to our gentle master of delightful scepticism, Anatole France, who, if I am not mistaken, was my opponent . . . before 'the Deluge'—has very well said that the 'I' is always odious." From that time on, Brichot dropped "I" and used a passive construction instead, but this did not prevent the reader from understanding that the writer was referring to himself and it made it possible for the writer now to speak of himself all the time, to comment on even the most insignificant of his own statements, to construct an entire article on a single negation—all under the wing of the passive form of the verb! For instance, if Brichot had said, even in another article, that the German armies had lost some of their courage, he would begin in this manner: "The truth is not camouflaged in these columns. It has been said here that the German armies have lost some of their courage. It was not said that they do not still possess great courage. Still less will it be said that they no longer have any courage at all. Nor will it be said that the ground gained, even if it be not," etc. In short, simply by announcing all that he would not say and

recalling all that he had said a few years before and all that Clausewitz, Ovid, Apollonius of Tyana had said so-and-so many centuries ago, he could easily have made up enough material for a large volume, and it is to be regretted that he did not publish his writings in book form, for these articles, so crammed with erudition, are now hard to procure. Coached by Mme. Verdurin, the Faubourg Saint-Germain at first laughed at Brichot in her salon, while continuing to admire him, once they were outside the "little clan." Then, just as it had formerly been the fashion to admire him, it became the style to poke fun at him, and even the ladies who

clan" as at this period, but now in derision They adopted as a criterion of the intelligence of each newcomer what he thought of Brichot's articles, if he did not answer correctly the first time, they did not fail to instruct him as to how it is recognised whether people are intelligent or not.

"In short, my dear friend," M de Charlus went on, "it is all very terrible and we have other things besides tiresome articles to weep over. They talk about vandalism and about statues destroyed. But is it not also vandalism to destroy so many marvellous young men, who were like just so many incomparably beautiful statues of different shades and colours? Will not a city which contains no more handsome men be like one whose statuary has been demolished? What pleasure can I take in going to dine at the restaurant when I am waited on by moss-covered old clowns who look like Father Didon, or else by women in little caps who make me think I have stepped into a quick-lunch place? That's the truth, my friend, and I think I have a right to talk in this way because the beautiful is just as truly beautiful even when done in living materials. What a pleasure to be waited on by men with rickets and eyeglasses whose reason for getting exempted can be seen on their faces! Contrary to what al-

ways used to be the case, if you want to feast your eyes on a handsome person in the restaurant, you must not look for him among the waiters, but among those they are waiting on. One used to be able to go and have another look at an employee, although they changed very frequently, but that English lieutenant over there who has come here for the first time and may be killed to-morrow, just try to find out who he is and when he will come here again! When Augustus of Poland, as Morand, the delightful author of *Clarissa,* relates, traded one of his regiments for a collection of Chinese pottery, he made a very poor bargain, in my opinion. Just think, those tall footmen, over six feet in height, who used to adorn the monumental staircases of our most charming friends, have all been killed, having enlisted, most of them, because people kept telling them the war would last only two months. Ah, they did not know, as I do, the might of Germany, the valour of the Prussian race!" he exclaimed, forgetting himself. And then, realising that he had shewn his own point of view too clearly, he added, "What I fear for France's sake is not so much Germany as the war itself. The people here at home imagine that the war is a gigantic prize fight which they are witnessing from a distance, through the kindness of the newspapers. But there is no resemblance between the two War is like a disease which, when you seem to have checked it at one point, breaks out at another. To-day Noyon will be relieved, to-morrow there will be no more bread or chocolate, and the day after to-morrow he who thought himself safe and who would, if necessary, accept philosophically a wound the consequences of which he does not picture to himself, will be in a panic when he reads in the newspaper that his class has been called back into service. As for historic buildings, the disappearance of a work of art unique in its beauty, like the Cathedral of Rheims, does not fill me with such dismay as the wiping out of so many combined effects which used to make even the tiniest village in France charming and instructive." (I immediately thought of Combray and how formerly I would have

feared to lower myself in the eyes of Mme. de Guermantes if I had owned up to the modest position which my family occupied there. I wondered if it had, perhaps, been revealed to the Guermantes and M. de Charlus by either Legrandin or Swann or Saint-Loup or Morel. But even being passed over in this manner was less painful to me than retrospective explanations would have been. All I hoped for was that M. de Charlus would not speak of Combray.) "I don't wish to say anything against the Americans, my dear sir," he continued. "Their generosity is said to be inexhaustible and, since there has been no orchestra leader in this war and each country has joined the dance a long time after the others and since the Americans began when we were nearly done for, they may well shew a zeal that four years of fighting have possibly cooled off in us. Even before the war, they liked our country and our art and bought our masterpieces at very high prices There are many of these works of art in their country to-day. But it just happens that this uprooted art, as M Barrès would say, produces quite the opposite effect to that which used to constitute the delightful charm of France The castle explained the church, which, in its turn, as it had been a place of pilgrimage, explained the

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ago, having a business matter to settle, in spite of a certain coldness that now e [illegible]
I had to call on my [illegible]
Combray. Combra [illegible]
many others. But our ancestors were represented there as patrons on some of the stained-glass windows and our coat-of-arms was reproduced on others. We had our family chapel there and our ancestral tombs This church has been destroyed by the French and the English because it was being used as a lookout by the Germans. All that composite of living history and art which constituted France is being destroyed and the end is not yet. And of course I'm not so

ridiculous as to compare for family reasons the destruction of the church of Combray with that of the Cathedral of Amiens, or that of Rheims, which was like a Gothic cathedral that had in some miraculous way recaptured the purity of classic *sculpture. I do not know whether the upraised arm* of Saint Firmin has been broken off. If it has, then the noblest affirmation of faith and energy has disappeared from the earth." "Only its symbol, my dear sir," I replied. "I adore certain symbols as much as you. But it would be absurd for the sake of the symbol to sacrifice the reality it represents. It is all right to have reverence for cathedrals until a day comes when, in order to save them, one would *have to be false to the truths they teach us. The arm* of Saint Firmin, raised in a gesture of almost military command, seemed to say, 'Let us be broken if honour requires it.' Do not sacrifice men to stones, whose beauty comes precisely from their having for a moment caught and held human truths." "I understand what you mean," M. de Charlus responded, "and M. Barrès, who has, alas, made us perform too many pilgrimages to the statue of Strasburg and the tomb of M. *Déroulède*, was touching and gracious when he wrote that even the Cathedral of Rheims was less precious to us than the lives of our soldiers—a declaration that makes rather ridiculous the wrath of our newspapers against the German general in command there, who said that the Cathedral of Rheims was of less value to him than the life of a single German soldier. That is just what is so exasperating [illegible] ng. The [illegible] many *de-* [illegible] for protecting their country against our ideas of *revanche* are the same as those of Barrès insisting on Mayence in order to protect us against any notions of invasion the Boches might have. Why did the recovering of Alsace-Lorraine seem to [illegible] fficient [illegible] tion of [illegible] *is now*

assured to France; I hope so with all my heart; you have no doubt about it; but after all, since the Allies, rightly or wrongly, feel sure of winning (for my part, I would naturally be delighted with this solution, but I see chiefly many paper victories and Pyrrhic victories at a cost they don't let us know) and the Boches no longer feel sure of winning, we see Germany endeavouring to hasten the peace and France prolonging the war—'la France juste,' which has a right to utter words of stern justice, but also 'la douce France,' which has a duty to utter words of pity, if only for the sake of her children and so that the flowers that blossom anew every spring may brighten something else than a land of graves. Be frank, my dear friend; you yourself expounded to me a theory about the things that exist only thanks to a perpetually renewed creation. 'The creation of the world did not happen once for all,' you said to me, 'it is going on necessarily every day.' Very well, if you are sincere, you cannot exempt war from this theory. It is of no use for our good friend Norpois—trotting out one of those rhetorical devices so dear to him, such as, 'the dawn of victory' and 'General Winter'—to write, 'Now that Germany has insisted on war, the die is cast'; the real truth is that each morning war is declared all over again. Therefore, the one who wants to keep it up is as guilty as the one who began it—possibly more so, for perhaps the latter did not foresee all its horrors. Now, there is nothing to assure us that a war which lasts so long, even if it should have a victorious outcome, is entirely without its dangers. It is difficult to discuss intelligently things that have no precedent or talk about the after-effects of an operation that is being tried for the first time. Generally, it is true, these innovations that cause so much alarm turn out very well. The most long-headed republicans thought it was madness to bring about the separation of Church and State. It went through as smoothly as a letter through the mails. Dreyfus has been rehabilitated and Picquard has been Minister of War without anybody saying 'boo.' And yet what may one not fear

from an excessive strain like that of a war of several years' uninterrupted duration? What will the men do when they come back? Will they be worn out? Will they be broken with fatigue or beside themselves with anger? Such a situation might take a very bad turn, if not for the country, at least for the government, perhaps even for our form of government. Long ago you had me read the admirable *Aimée de Coigny*, by Maurras. I should be greatly surprised if some Aimée de Coigny were not awaiting from the development of the war now being waged by the Republic what in 1812 Aimée de Coigny awaited from the war waged by the Empire. If the present-day Aimée exists, will her hopes be realised? I trust not. But, to return to the war itself, 'the one who began it'—was it Emperor William? I doubt it very much. And, even if it was he, what did he do different from what, for example, Napoleon did—something which I myself consider abominable, but still I am astonished to see it horrify so greatly men who swing the incense-burner before the Tomb of Napoleon or who cried out, with General X, the day war was declared, 'This is the greatest day of my life; I have been waiting forty years for it!' God knows if anyone protested more vigorously than I at the disproportionate place in society given to nationalists and military men—and that, too, at a time when every friend of the arts was accused of spending his time on things harmful to the fatherland and every civilisation that was not belligerent was considered pernicious. Why, a really well bred gentleman scarcely counted alongside a general. One fool of a woman almost introduced me to M. Syveton! You may say that what I was trying to maintain were merely rules of etiquette; but, notwithstanding their apparent triviality, perhaps they would have prevented many outrages. I have always honoured the men who defend grammar or logic. Fifty years afterwards, we realise that they warded off great perils. Our nationalists are the greatest Hun-haters and die-hards in the world. but in the last fifteen years their philosophy has changed completely. In reality they are working hard

to prolong the war, but it is only to 'wipe out a too belligerent race' and 'through love of peace'. For a warlike civilisation, something they considered so fine fifteen years ago, now fills them with horror; not only do they blame Prussia for having allowed the military element to get control, but they believe that militarist civilisations have at all times been destructive of all that they now hold precious, not only the arts, but even polite society. It is enough that one of their former critics turn convert to nationalism for him to become by the same stroke an advocate of peace. He is convinced, for example, that, in all warlike civilisations, woman has occupied an abject and degraded position One does not dare to remind him that the 'fair ladies' of the medieval knights and Dante's Beatrice were placed on thrones perhaps quite as lofty as M. Becque's heroines I fully expect one of these days to find myself seated at table below a Russian revolutionist or even below one of our generals who are now carrying on war because of their horror of war and in order to punish a people for cultivating an ideal which they themselves, fifteen years ago, esteemed to be the only invigorating one. Only a few months ago the poor Czar was being praised for having called together the Hague Peace Conference. But now that they had liberated Russia, they forget the thing for which they used to glorify her. So turns the wheel of the world! And yet Germany uses so exactly the same expressions as France that it would almost make you think she was quoting verbatim. She does not tire of declaring that she is 'fighting for her very existence' When I read, 'We shall continue to struggle against our cruel and implacable enemy until we have secured a peace that shall guarantee us against aggression for all time to come and in order that the blood of our brave soldiers shall not have been shed in vain,' or 'He who is not for us is against us,' I do not know whether the remark comes from Emperor William or M. Poincaré, for each of them has used it, with slight variations, a score of times—although, to be frank, I have to admit that, in this instance, the Emperor

imitating the President of the Republic. Perhaps France would not have been so anxious to prolong the war if she had continued to be the weaker party; but even more probably, Germany
had not ceased
strong, as you
habit of talking very loud, partly through nervousness and partly because he sought an outlet for impressions which, never having cultivated any of the arts, he had to relieve himself of as an aviator gets rid of his bombs, even if it were out in the open fields, where his words reached nobody's ears—and particularly out in society, where his remarks fell at random and where people listened to him, some through desire to curry favour, some through confidence in him and others, one can say, through force and fear, such was his way of tyrannising over his hearers. On the boulevards, this habit of orating was also a mark of contempt for the passers-by, on whose account he would no more have lowered his voice than he would swerve an inch out of his path. But it sounded very much out of place there and attracted attention and, when people turned around, they caught remarks which might have caused us to be taken for defeatists. I called M. de Charlus's attention to this but only succeeded in exciting his laughter. "Admit that that would be very funny," he said. "After all," he added, "one never can tell; every one of us runs the risk each evening of becoming the subject of the outstanding item of local news in the papers the next morning. And after all, why should I not be shot in the *fossés de Vincennes?* The same thing happened to my great-uncle, the Duc d'Enghien. The thirst for noble blood turns the head of a certain element of the populace, which, however, in that respect shews itself more fastidious than the lions; you know that, for those beasts to throw themselves on Mme. Verdurin, it would be enough that she have a slight scratch on the nose—on what, in my youth, we would have called her 'beak'." And he burst out laughing as if we had been alone in some salon. From time to time,

seeing some suspicious-looking individuals come forward out of the dark corners as M. de Charlus went by and fall in with one another a short distance behind him, I wondered whether it would be more agreeable to him that I leave him alone or that I stay by him. In the same way, if you meet an old man who is subject to frequent fits of an epileptic nature and you notice by his unsteady walk that an attack is probably coming on, you wonder whether he wants your assistance as a good Samaritan more than he dreads your presence as a witness of the malady which he would like to conceal but which the very fact of your being present may bring on the sooner, whereas he might have kept it off if he had been quite alone. In the case of the sick man, the imminence of the incident which you are uncertain whether to avoid or not is indicated by his circuitous walk, like that of a drunken man, whereas in M. de Charlus's case, by an ingenious arrangement, the various different positions that indicated the possibility of an incident which I was not sure whether or not he wished me to head off by my presence, were assumed, not by the Baron, who walked straight on, but by a whole group of actors in the background. All the same, I believe that he wished to avoid the meeting, for he led me hurriedly down a side street, darker than the boulevard, into which the latter poured a continuous stream of soldiers of every arm and every nationality, an inflow of young men that consoled and compensated M. de Charlus for the frenzied draining of men to the frontier which had made such a void in Paris during the first days of mobilisation. M. de Charlus never ceased admiring the brilliant uniforms that passed before us, making Paris as cosmopolitan as a seaport and as unreal as a background of a painting where the artist has thrown together a few bits of architecture merely as a pretext for grouping the most varied and dazzling costumes. He kept all his respect and affection for certain ladies of aristocratic rank who were accused of defeatism, just as formerly he had done for some who were accused of Dreyfusism. He regretted only that, by lowering

themselves to take part in politics, they had given an opening for the attacks of journalists. In his eyes, as far as they were concerned, everything was the same as ever. For his superficial way of looking at things was so consistently applied that for him birth combined with beauty and other social advantages was the one permanent thing, and the war and the Dreyfus case were vulgar and ephemeral fashions. If the Duchesse de Guermantes had been shot for trying to bring about a separate peace with Austria, he would always have considered her no less noble and no more disgraced than Marie Antoinette seems to us to-day for having been condemned to be beheaded. As he talked with me at that moment, M. de Charlus stood there, noble as a sort of Saint Vallier or Saint Mégrin, erect, unbending, dignified; he spoke seriously and for the moment did not have any of the mannerisms by which men of his peculiar type betray themselves. And yet why cannot a single one of them have a voice that is absolutely true? Even when it was most serious, his rang false and in need of tuning. Besides, he literally did not know which way to turn and frequently raised his eyes to the sky, expressing regret that he did not have field-glasses, although they would not have been of much use to him because, on account of the Zeppelin raid two days before, which had aroused the vigilance of the authorities, there were soldiers everywhere, even in the sky. The airplanes that I had seen a few hours before, looking like little brown insects against the blue twilight, were now disappearing like glowing firebrands into the night, made still blacker by the extinction of many of the street lights. The greatest impression of beauty which we got from those human shooting stars came, perhaps, more especially from their making us gaze at the sky, which people usually look at so seldom in that Paris whose beauty I had seen in 1914 awaiting, almost defenceless, the menace of the approaching enemy. Now, as then, there was, to be sure, the changeless ancient splendour of a moon, cruelly and mysteriously serene, pouring over the historic buildings, still intact, the useless beauty of

her lights but [illegible]

planes or from the Eiffel Tower, one knew to be directed by intelligent will-power, by a friendly vigilance that filled us with the same sort of emotion and inspired in us the same kind of gratitude and peace of mind as I had felt in Saint-Loup's room, in the cell of that military monastery where so many fervent, disciplined hearts were being trained for the day when, in the flower of their youth, they should unhesitatingly make the supreme sacrifice.

After [illegible]

[illegible] completely so. Airplanes still shot up like flaming rockets to [illegible] their beams, like [illegible] and forth acro[illegible] airplanes slipped in among the constellations and, seeing these "new stars," one would have thought himself in another hemisphere. M. de Charlus expressed to me his admiration for those aviators and, since he could not prevent himself from giving free rein to his German sympathies any more than to his other inclinations, while at the same time disavowing them all, he continued, "Let me add, by the way, that I admire quite as much the Germans who go up in the Gothas. And in the Zeppelins, just think what courage that takes! I tell you, they are simply heroic! What if they do drop their bombs on civilians—don't those batteries fire at them? Are you afraid of Gothas and cannon?" I avowed I was not and perhaps I was mistaken. My indolence having given me the habit of putting off my work from day to day, doubtless I figured to myself that it might be the same way with death. How can you be afraid of a cannon which you are convinced is not going to hit you that day? Moreover, when formulated one by one, these ideas of bombs hurled and of possible death added nothing to the tragic picture I

imagined of the coming of the German air machines, until one evening I saw one of them, tossed about and partly cut off from my sight by billows of mist in the stormy sky—an airplane which, though I knew its murderous mission, seemed to my imagination a celestial, star-like thing—actually hurl a bomb toward us. For the essential reality of a danger is perceived only through that thing, new and impossible to reduce to what we already know, which is called an impression and which is often summed up in a single line, as it was in that case, a line that disclosed a purpose, a line in which there was the potentiality of a deed which deformed it—while, as I stood on the Pont de la Concorde, up there around the threatening airplane, now at bay (as though the fountains of the Champs-Élysées, the Place de la Concorde and the Tuileries were reflected on the clouds) the luminous streams from the searchlights were directed skyward in lines which likewise had their purpose, a foreseeing and protecting purpose, directed by wise and able men, to whom, as that night in the quarters at Doncières, I was grateful for deigning to use their might to stand guard over us with such beautiful precision.

The night was as fine as in 1914 and Paris was threatened in the same manner. The moonlight seemed like a soft, continuous flash-light that made it possible for the last time to take night pictures of such beautiful panoramas as the Place Vendôme and the Place de la Concorde, which, through my fear lest the shells destroy them, acquired by contrast, in their beauty still intact, a sort of rich fullness, as though they were reaching forward, offering their defenceless architecture to the enemy's blows. "You are not afraid?" repeated M. de Charlus. "The Parisians do not grasp the situation. I am told that Mme. Verdurin is holding receptions daily. I know it only by hearsay, for I know nothing about them myself, having broken with them entirely," he added, lowering not only his glance, as if he had seen a telegrapher go by, but also his head and shoulders, and raising his arms in the gesture which signifies, if not, "I wash my hands of it," at

[illegible] " (although I was [illegible] Morel goes there a [illegible] rst time he had revived this subject with me) "They claim he is very sorry about the past and would like to make up with me," he added, displaying the credulity both of the man of the Faubourg who says, "I hear that France is in communication with Germany more actively than ever and that they have even started negotiations," and of the suitor who has not been convinced even by the cruellest rebuffs. "Anyhow, if he wishes it, he has only to say so; I am older than he and it is not for me to take the first steps." And certainly this was so obvious, it was unnecessary to say it. But, more than that, it was not even sincere and that was why one felt so embarrassed with M. de Charlus, because one felt that, even in saying that it was not for him to take the first steps, he was doing precisely that and was waiting for me to offer to undertake to bring them together again. I knew well, indeed, that naive or pretended credulity of people who are in love with someone—or simply are not invited by someone—and who attribute to that other person a desire that he has not manifested, notwithstanding wearisome solicitation.

Unfortunately, the very next day, let me say here, M. de Charlus ran into Morel suddenly in the street. The latter, in order to arouse the older man's jealousy, took him by the arm and told him some stories that were more or less true and, when M. de Charlus, beside himself, needing to have Morel stay with him that evening, begged him not to go anywhere else, Morel, catching sight of a friend, bade the Baron farewell. M. de Charlus, angered and hoping that this threat (which, of course, it did not seem likely he would ever carry out) would make Morel stay, exclaimed, "Take care; I will have my revenge," but Morel went off with a laugh, patting his friend on the back and putting his arm around his waist, to the latter's great astonishment.

From the suddenly trembling voice with which M. de Charlus had scanned his words as he spoke of Morel, and

from the dark look that lurked deep in his eyes, I got the impression that there was more here than merely a commonplace insistence. I was not mistaken and I am going to relate at once the two incidents which afterwards proved it to me. (For the second of these incidents, I shall have to get far ahead of my story, as it happened after the death of M. de Charlus, which did not occur until much later, and we shall have occasion to meet him several times and find him a very different man from the one we have known, especially the last time, when he had completely forgotten Morel.) As for the first of these incidents, it occurred only two years after that evening when I walked down the boulevards with M. de Charlus in the way I have told. Well then, some two years after that evening, I met Morel. I immediately thought of M. de Charlus and of the pleasure it would give him to see the violinist again, and I urged him insistently to go to see him, even if only just once. "He was kind to you," I reminded Morel. "He is already an old man; he might die; you should settle your old quarrel and wipe out all traces of the disagreement." Morel seemed entirely of the same opinion as to the desirability of a reconciliation, but still he refused flatly to go to see M. de Charlus even once. "You are making a mistake," I said. "Is it obstinacy, indolence, meanness, false pride, virtue (I guarantee yours will not be attacked) or coyness?" Then the violinist, his face contracted with a confession that doubtless cost him dearly, replied with a shudder, "No, it's for none of those reasons. Virtue? What do I care about that? Meanness? On the contrary, I am beginning to feel sorry for him. It is not out of coyness; that would be useless. Nor because of indolence, for there are whole days when I sit twiddling my thumbs. No, it is not for any of those reasons. It is—but never tell anyone and I'm a fool to tell you—it's—it's—it's because I'm afraid!" He began to tremble in every limb. I confessed that I did not understand. "No, don't ask me. Let's not talk about it any more. You don't know him as I do; in fact, you don't know

him at all." "But what harm can he do you? On the contrary, he will be still less anxious to harm you because there will no longer be any hard feeling between you. And besides, at bottom you know he is very kind-hearted." "By gad, I certainly do know that he is kind-hearted! And he is refinement and uprightness personified. But leave me, please. Don't talk to me any more about it, I beg you. It is shameful to admit, but I'm afraid." The second incident dates from after the death of M de Charlus. They brought me some little remembrances he had left me, also a letter in a triple envelope, written at least ten years before his death. He had been seriously ill at the time and had made all his arrangements, then he had recovered, only later to fall into the condition in which we shall find him on the day of an afternoon reception at the home of the Princesse de Guermantes. The letter, lying in a strong box with articles he was leaving to some of his friends, had remained there for seven years, seven years in which he had entirely forgotten Morel. The letter, written in a fine, firm handwriting, was as follows:

"My dear friend:

The ways of Providence are past finding out. Sometimes it makes use of the weakness of a mediocre person to save from disaster the supereminence of a just man. You know Morel, what he came from and to what lofty heights I planned to elevate him, in other words, to my own level. You know how he chose instead to return, not to the dust and ashes from which any man (that is to say, the true phœnix) may be born again, but to the slime where crawls the viper. He disgraced himself and thereby saved me from falling from grace. You know that my coat of arms contains the motto of Our Lord Himself, *Inculcabis super leonem et aspidem*, and represents a man who has under the soles of his feet, as heraldic supporters, a lion and a serpent. Now, if I have succeeded in trampling under foot, as I have done,

the lion that is in me, it is thanks to the serpent and his prudence, which is sometimes too lightly called a failing but which the profound wisdom of the Holy Gospel considers a virtue, at least in others. Our serpent, whose hissings used to be so harmoniously modulated when he had a charmer—himself under a spell, for that matter—not only was snake-like and musical, but carried to the point of cowardice that virtue which I now regard as divine, namely, prudence. It was this divine prudence which made him resist the appeals I made to him through others to come to see me again, and I shall not have any peace in this world or hope of pardon in the next unless I make this confession to you. In this matter he was the instrument of Divine Wisdom, for I had made up my mind that he should not leave my house alive. One or the other of us would have had to die. I was determined to kill him. God, to save me from a crime, counselled him prudence. I doubt not that the intercession of the Archangel Michael, my patron saint, played a great part therein, and I now pray to him to forgive me for having so neglected him these many years and for having so illy requited the boundless bounty he has bestowed upon me, most especially in my battle with sin. I owe it to this faithful protector—and I say this in the fullness of my faith and my intelligence—that the Heavenly Father inspired Morel not to come. And so it is I, instead, who am dying.

Your ever devoted *semper idem,*

P. G. Charlus"

Now I understood Morel's fear. There was, it is true, much boasting and literary affectation in this letter, but the confession was true, and Morel knew better than I that the "half-insane side" which Mme. de Guermantes claimed to see in her brother-in-law was not confined, as I had thought until then, to passing outbreaks of superficial and ineffectual anger.

But I must go back and pick up the thread. I am walking down the boulevards beside M. de Charlus, who has just chosen me as an informal intermediary for overtures of peace between him and Morel. Seeing that I did not reply, he continued, "By the way, I don't understand why he doesn't play his violin any more. There are no more concerts, it is true, on the ground that this is war-time, but there are dances, and people still go out to dinner. Parties fill what, if the Germans continue to advance, may be the last days of our Pompeii. Just let the lava from some German Vesuvius (their naval guns are quite as terrible as a volcano) catch them at their toilette and fix for all eternity the pose in which they are overtaken, and the children of the future will get their education in ancient history by looking at illustrations in their schoolbooks shewing Mme. de Molé about to apply a final layer of cosmetics before going to dine with a sister-in-law, or Sosthène de Guermantes putting the finishing touches on his false eyebrows, this will furnish lecture material for future Brichots; the frivolous life of an epoch after ten centuries have passed over it is worthy of the most scholarly research, especially if it has been kept intact by a volcanic eruption or by substances similar to lava, hurled in a bombardment. What documents for future historians, when asphyxiating gases, resembling those that Vesuvius vomited forth, and crumbling buildings like those that buried Pompeii shall preserve intact all the last reckless fair ones who have not yet dispatched their paintings and statuary to Bayonne! And anyhow, hasn't it been for the past year a sort of Pompeii in instalments every evening, with these folk hurrying down cellar, not to bring up some old bottle of Mouton Rothschild or Saint-Emilion, but to hide themselves and their most precious possessions, like the priests of Herculaneum, overtaken by death at the moment of carrying away the sacred vases. It is always attachment to some possession that causes the death of the possessor. Paris, it is true, was not founded by Hercules, as was Herculaneum. But how many resemblances force themselves on our atten-

tion! And this prophetic vision which is granted us is not peculiar to our age alone; each age has had it. If I believe that to-morrow we may meet the fate of the cities around Vesuvius, the latter felt that they were menaced with the same destiny as the accursed cities of the Bible. They have found on the walls of one of the houses of Pompeii this significant inscription. *Sodoma, Gomora.*" I do not know whether it was this name Sodom and the thoughts it suggested to him, or the idea of the bombardment, which caused M. de Charlus to raise his eyes to heaven for an instant, but he quickly brought them back to earth. "I admire all the heroes of this war," he went on. "Take, for instance, the English soldiers, whom I regarded a bit lightly at the beginning of the war as mere football players who were rather presumptuous to match themselves against professionals—and what professionals!—well, from the æsthetic point of view alone, they are like athletes of ancient Greece—yes, I mean Greece—young men of Plato's time, or Spartans, to be more exact. I have a friend who went to Rouen, where they have their camp. He saw some marvels of beauty, marvels you have no idea of. It is no longer Rouen; it is a different city. Naturally, there is also old Rouen, with the emaciated saints of its cathedral, and of course it is also very fine, but it's not the same thing. And our *poilus!* I can't tell you what a delight I take in them, in the young fellows from Paris—there, like that one going by, with his sophisticated, wide-awake air and his roguish expression. I often stop them and have a little chat with them. What shrewdness and common sense! And the lads from the country, how cute and amusing they are, with their rolling of the *r* and their backwoods jargon! You see, I have lived a great deal in the country, slept in farmhouses; I know their language. But our admiration for the French should not lead us to underestimate our enemies; that would be lowering our own value also. You don't know what a fine soldier the German is; you have not seen him, as I have, march past at *Paradeschritt*, the goose-step, *unter den Linden.*" Com-

ing back to the ideal of virility which he had outlined to me at Balbec and which had come to assume a philosophical form in his mind, and employing absurd arguments which at times, even when he had just been very fine, shewed the too thin veneer of the mere man of the world, however intelligent, he continued, "You see, that superb, stalwart fellow, [illegible] creature, who thinks [illegible] country, *Deutschland* [illegible] er all, and while they are preparing themselves in virile fashion, we have ruined ourselves with dilettantism." This word probably signified to M. de Charlus something akin to literature, for, doubtless recalling immediately that I was fond of that subject and at one time had intended to devote myself to it, he slapped me on the shoulder (taking advantage of this gesture to give me such a blow that it hurt as much as the recoil of the "75" against my shoulder used to when I was doing my military service) and said, as if to soften the criticism, "Yes, we have ruined ourselves with dilettantism, all of us; you, too, you can say your *mea culpa*, the same as I, for we have all been too dilettante" From surprise at the criticism, slowness in repartee, a feeling of deference toward my companion and appreciation of his friendly kindliness, I replied as if I, too, ought to beat my breast, as he invited me to do, [illegible]

m[illegible]
th[illegible]
pl[illegible]
when he got home, M de Charlus would still be surrounded by soldiers, for he had transformed his apartment into a military hospital—in doing which, by the way, I think he was yielding less to the needs of his imagination than to his kindness of heart.

It was a transparently clear night, without a breath of

air stirring. I imagined that the Seine, flowing through the hoops formed by the bridges and the reflexion of their arches in the water, must resemble the Bosphorus. And as a symbol either of the invasion prophesied by M. de Charlus's defeatism, or of the cooperation of our Mussulman brothers with the armies of France, the slender, curved moon, recalling a sequin, seemed to place the Parisian sky under the Oriental sign of the crescent. For an instant M. de Charlus stood motionlessly looking at a Senegalese soldier, as he said good-bye to me, crushing my hand in his strong grip, a German habit, peculiar to people of the Baron's sort, and continuing for some time to "manipulate" it (as Cottard would have said) as if he wanted to restore to my joints a suppleness they had never lost. With some blind people, the sense of touch takes the place of sight to a certain extent, but I have no idea which of the senses it was taking the place of in this case. Perhaps he thought he was merely *shaking hands with me, the same as no doubt he thought* he had simply glanced at the Senegalese, who had passed on into the darkness without deigning to notice that he was being admired. But in both respects the Baron was mistaken; he overdid both the pressure and the glances. "How all the Orient of Decamps, Fromentin, Ingres and Delacroix is summed up there!" he said, still entranced by the fleeting glimpse of the Senegalese soldier. "As you know, I am interested in things and people only from the point of view of the painter and the philosopher. And besides, I'm too old. But what a misfortune that one of us is not an odalisque, so as to complete the picture!" It was not the Orient of Decamps, or even of Delacroix, that began to haunt my [illegible] Orient [illegible] little [illegible] streets, I thought of the Caliph Haroun al Raschid [illegible] in the ren[illegible] night and [illegible] for a long time all the bars had been closed and taxis were

few on account of the scarcity of gasolene and those I did see, driven by Syrians or Negroes, did not even take the trouble to answer my signals. The only place where I could have secured something to drink and regained the strength to continue my homeward way would have been in some hotel. But in the street I had come to, rather far from the center of the city, the hotels had all shut down since the Gothas began dropping their bombs over Paris. It was the same with nearly all the large stores, the owners of which, either because they were unable to get employees or themselves seized with fear, had fled to the country, leaving on the door one of the customary handwritten notices announcing that they would reopen at a distant and, moreover, problematical date. The other establishments which had still been able to keep going announced in a similar manner that they were open only twice a week. One felt that poverty, despair and fear inhabited the whole quarter. I was all the more surprised, therefore, to notice, among all these abandoned buildings, one where life seemed, on the contrary, to have triumphed over fright and failure and to be maintaining its activity and fulness. Behind the closed shutters of every window the lights, although shaded to comply with police regulations, disclosed a complete disregard of economy. And the door was constantly opening to let some new guest in or out This hotel must have aroused the envy of all the nearby business men because of the money its owners were apparently making; and my curiosity was likewise aroused when I saw an officer come out quickly fifteen yards ahead of me—in other words, too far away for [illegible]

[illegible], not his face, [illegible] under a large [illegible] ween the distance he covered and the few seconds he took to execute this sortie, after the fashion of a besieged party attempting a sally. In consequence, although I did not actually recognise him, I thought—I will not say of the general appearance,

nor the slenderness, nor the gait or quickness of Saint-Loup, but of the sort of ubiquity that was so characteristic of him. The mysterious officer able to occupy so many different points in such a short space of time disappeared into a cross street without having noticed me and I stood there, wondering whether or not to enter this hotel, the unpretentious appearance of which made me doubt very much whether it was Saint-Loup I had seen coming out of it. I instinctively recalled that Saint-Loup had been unjustly involved in an espionage case because his name had been found in letters seized on a German officer. He was completely vindicated by the military authorities, let me hasten to say. Nevertheless, in spite of myself, I connected this circumstance with what I had just seen. Was this hotel serving as a rendezvous for spies? The officer had been out of sight for some time when I saw privates of several branches of the service go in, and this strengthened my suspicions. In addition, I was extremely thirsty. "I shall probably be able to get something to drink here," I said to myself, and I took advantage of this pretext to try to satisfy also my curiosity, notwithstanding the uneasiness mingled with it. So I do not think it was merely the curiosity aroused by the meeting with the officer which decided me to mount the short flight of steps, at the top of which the door of a sort of lobby was open, doubtless on account of the heat. At first I thought I was not going to be able to satisfy my curiosity because I heard several people who came and asked for rooms get the reply that there was not a single one left. But then I caught on that evidently the only thing against those people was that they did not belong to this nest of spies, for when a sailor applied a moment later, they quickly gave him Room 28. Without being seen, thanks to the darkness, I was able to catch sight of some soldiers and two workmen, quietly chatting in a small, stuffy room, gaudily decorated with colored pictures of women cut out of illustrated magazines. These men were talking quietly and voicing patriotic opinions. "What else can a fellow do?

I will stand by my buddies," one of them was saying. "You bet I don't expect to get killed," another, who, from what I was able to gather, was going back the next day to a dangerous post, replied in response to good wishes which I had not heard. "I declare, at twenty-two and after only six months' service, that would be rotten luck," he exclaimed in a tone in which one detected not so much a desire to live long as a conviction that he was reasoning correctly and that the fact of being only twenty-two ought to make it more likely, and even certain, that he would not be killed. "In Paris," another remarked, "it's the limit, you'd never know a war was going on! Hey there, Jule, you're going to enlist, I hope." "You bet I am! I want to go and take a crack at those lousy Boches" "But that fellow Joffre does nothing but make love to the wives of cabinet ministers. What has he ever done?" "It's a shame to listen to such talk," said a middle-aged aviator, turning toward the workman who had just spoken. "I wouldn't advise you to talk like that in the front-line trenches; the boys would soon put an end to your chatter."

The banality of these conversations did not give me much desire to listen to any more and I was about to enter or else go down the steps again when I was jolted out of my indifference by hearing these remarks, which made me shudder: "Can you beat it, the boss not back yet! By God, I haven't the least idea where he's going to get chains at this time of night." "What of it, since the guy's tied up all right?" "It's true he's tied up, but he is and he isn't. If they tied me up like that, I could get away all right." "But the padlock is on" "Sure, it's on, but anybody could open it in a pinch. The trouble is, the chains aren't long enough." "You're not explaining to *me* about it, I hope! Didn't I beat him all night, till my hands were covered with blood? It's your turn to-night" "Not mine. It's Maurice's. It'll be my turn Sunday; the boss promised it." Now I understood why they had needed the sailor's strong arms. Since they turned away peaceful citizens, the hotel was not merely

a "hang-out" for spies. Some horrible crime was going to be committed if someone did not appear on the scene in time to expose it and have the guilty ones arrested. And yet it all seemed like a dream, a fairy tale, in that peaceful night, with the menace overhead. So it was with both the pride of an officer of the law and the voluptuous thrill of a poet that I stepped deliberately into the hotel. I touched my hat lightly and those present, without getting up, returned my greeting more or less courteously. "Could somebody kindly tell me to whom I should apply to get a room and have something to drink sent up?" "Just wait a minute, the boss is out." "But the 'chief' is upstairs," broke in one of the talkers. "Why, you know very well he is not to be disturbed." "Do you think they can give me a room?" "Guess so." "Number 43 ought to be free," said the young man who was sure he wasn't going to be killed because he was only twenty-two. And he moved along the sofa slightly to make room for me. "Why not open the window a bit, there's so much smoke in here?" suggested the aviator. And the fact is, every man had his pipe or his cigarette. "All right, but then close the shutters first. You know lights are forbidden on account of the Zeppelins." "There won't be any more Zeppelins. I saw in the paper where they had all been shot down." "There won't be any more, there won't be any more; what do you know about it? When you have done fifteen months' service, as I have, and brought down your fifth Boche airplane, then you can talk. You shouldn't believe the newspapers. Yesterday they were over Compiègne. They killed a mother and her two children." "A mother and two children!" the young man who had good hopes of not being killed exclaimed with an air of profound pity and a tender look in his eyes; he had a frank, energetic and very winning countenance. "We don't get any word from Big Jule. His godmother hasn't had a letter from him for a week; this is the first time he has ever gone so long without writing to her." "Who is his godmother?" "The lady that takes care of the com-

fort station just below the Olympia." "Are they lovers?" "What are you talking about? She's a married woman, as straight as they make 'em. She sends him money every week just because she's good-hearted. She's a swell woman" "So you know Big Jule?" "Do I know him?" replied the twenty-two-year-old with some heat. He's one of my closest friends. There aren't many I think as much of, and a fine pal, too, always ready to do a fellow a good turn. It sure would be a rotten piece of luck if anything happened to him." Somebody suggested they throw dice and, by the feverish haste with which the twenty-two-year-old shook the dice and called out the numbers, his eyes popping out of his head, it was easy to see that he had the temperament of a gambler. I did not catch what somebody said to him just then, but he exclaimed, in a tone of great scorn, "Big Jule a pimp! You mean, that guy says he is. But I'll be damned if he is. I've seen him pay his girl—yes, pay her. I won't say that Algeria Jenny didn't use to give him something, but she never gave him more than five francs at a time and sh [illegible]
francs a day. [illegible]
have to be pret [illegible]
she has a hard life, I admit, but she can make as much as she pleases—well, she doesn't send him anything. Big Jule a pimp, eh? On that basis, there's plenty more could call themselves pimps. Not only he isn't a pimp, but in my opinion he's a big fool not to take it." The oldest of the lot, who had doubtless been charged by the proprietor, because of his age, with maintaining a certain degree of decent behaviour, having gone to the toilet for a moment, heard only the end of this conversation. But he looked at me instinctively and seemed noticeably annoyed at the impression he felt it must have made on me. Without directly addressing the twenty-two-year-old, although it was he who had just advanced this theory of mercenary love, he said, addressing everybody in general, "You're talking too much and too loud. The window is open. Some people are try-

ing to sleep at this hour. You know, if the boss should come back and find you talking this way, he wouldn't like it." Just at that minute they heard the door open and all became silent, thinking it was "the boss," but it was only a foreign chauffeur, whom they all welcomed
But, catching sight of a
newcomer's vest, the
with a laughing glance, following it with a frown and a serious wink in my direction I caught all this and understood that the glance meant, "What's that? Did you steal it? Congratulations!" while the frown and the wink signified, "Don't say anything—look out for that guy—we don't know him." Suddenly "the boss" came in, loaded down with many yards of heavy chain, strong enough to bind several hardened criminals; he was sweating and exclaimed, "Well, that was some load to carry! If you weren't all of you so lazy, I wouldn't have had to go and get it myself." I told him I wanted a room. "Just for a few hours. I could not find a taxi and I'm not feeling well. But I would like someone to bring me up something to drink" "Pete, go down cellar and bring up some black-currant wine and tell them to get 43 ready. There's 7 ringing. They say they're sick. Sick my eye! They're coke-fiends. They look half doped already. I'll have to throw them out. Did you put a pair of clean sheets in 22? There you are, there's 7 ringing again. Run and see what they want. Come, Maurice, what are you doing there? You know he's waiting for you. Go up to 14A. And step livelier than that!" Maurice went out quickly, following the manager, who disappeared with his chains, somewhat annoyed that I should have caught sight of them. "How come you're so late?" the twenty-two-year-old asks the chauffeur. "Late? How do you make that out? I'm an hour ahead of time. But it's too hot walking. I'm not due till midnight." "Who is it then you're coming for?" "Pamela, the Charmer," said the Oriental chauffeur, his smile disclosing his handsome white teeth. "Ah!" said the twenty-two-year-old. They soon

shewed me up to Room 43, but the atmosphere was so unpleasant and my curiosity was so great that, having drunk my black-currant wine, I started downstairs again, then, taken with another idea, I turned around and went up past my own floor to the very top. Suddenly, from a room isolated at the end of a hallway, there seemed to come smothered cries. I walked quickly in that direction and put my ear to the door. "I beg you, mercy! mercy! Have pity! Release me! Don't hit me so hard!" a voice was saying. "I kiss your feet, I humble myself before you, I won't do it again. Have pity on me!" "No, you worthless trash," another voice replied. "And, since you bawl and crawl on your knees, we're going to chain you to the bed. No pity!" And I heard the cracking of a whip, probably made still more cutting with nails, for I heard cries of pain Then I noticed that this room had a small, round window opening on the hallway, over which they had neglected to draw the curtain; tiptoeing in the darkness, I made my way softly to this window and there, chained to a bed like Prometheus to his rock, and being beaten by Maurice with a cat-o'-nine-tails which was, as a matter of fact, studded with nails, I saw before me M de Charlus, bleeding all over and covered with welts which shewed that this was not the first time the torture had taken place. Suddenly the door opened and someone, who luckily had not seen me, entered—it was Jupien. He approached the Baron with a respectful air and a knowing smile. "Well, do you need me for anything?" The Baron begged Jupien to have Maurice go out for a moment. Jupien put him out in the most offhand manner. "Nobody can hear us?" the Baron inquired of Jupien, who reassured him. The Baron knew that Jupien, endowed with the intelligence of a literary man, had no practical sense at all and always talked right out before the people in question, using hidden meanings that deceived nobody and nicknames that everyone recognised. "One second," interrupted Jupien, who had heard a bell ring from Room 3. It was a deputy of *l'Action Libérale* who was

leaving. Jupien did not need to look at the signal-board because he recognised the ring, the deputy being in the habit of coming every day after lunch. That day he had had to change his hour because of his daughter's wedding at noon at Saint-Pierre de Chaillot. So he had come in the evening, but was anxious to leave early on account of his wife, who was quick to worry if he stayed out late, especially in these times of frequent bombings. Jupien was particular about accompanying him to the door, so as to shew the respect he felt for the office of Deputy, but without any idea of seeking advantage for himself. For although this deputy, repudiating the exaggerated program of *l'Action Française* —moreover, he would have been incapable of understanding a single line of Charles Maurras or Léon Daudet—was on good terms with the cabinet ministers, who were flattered to be invited to his hunting parties, Jupien would not have dared ask him for the least assistance in his difficulties with the police. He knew that, if he had ventured to broach the subject to this wealthy and cowardly deputy, he would immediately have lost the most generous of his customers without heading off even the least objectionable of the police raids. Jupien accompanied the deputy to the door, watched him depart with his hat pulled down over his eyes and his coat collar turned up, hoping to slip by undetected (as he did in his campaign platforms) and then went upstairs again to M. de Charlus and said, "That was M. Eugène." At Jupien's, as in sanitariums, they spoke of people by their first names, taking care to whisper the family name besides, either to satisfy the curiosity of the other guests or to add to the prestige of the establishment. Sometimes, however, Jupien did not know the real identity of his customers, so he would draw on his imagination and say that it was this or that stock broker or artist or member of the nobility (merely passing errors, charming for those whose names he used incorrectly) but in the end he had to resign himself to not knowing who "Monsieur Victor" was. In order to please the Baron, Jupien had also the habit of

doing just the opposite to what is considered proper in certain circles, where they say, for instance, "Allow me to present Monsieur Lebrun" (and in your ear, "He calls himself 'Monsieur Lebrun' but in reality he is the Grand Duke of Russia"). In quite the opposite way, Jupien felt that it was not sufficient to introduce a milkman to M. de Charlus. He would whisper, with a significant wink, "He is a milkman, but in reality he is one of the most dangerous *apaches* of Belleville." (You should have seen the suggestive air with which he said "*apache*".) And as if these references were not enough, he would try to add some "honourable mentions," such as, "He has been convicted several times of theft and house-breaking", "He has been in jail for fighting"—the same suggestive manner—"with passers-by, whom he nearly crippled for life", "He has been in the African battalion, where he killed his sergeant."

The Baron was even slightly vexed with Jupien, for he knew that in this house, which he had commissioned his factotum to purchase and to manage with a subordinate in charge, everyone, through the bungling of the uncle of Mlle. d'Oloron, the late Mme. de Cambremer, knew more or less definitely his name and who he was (but many of them thought it an assumed name and, pronouncing it badly, had distorted it, so that he was protected, not by Jupien's discretion, but by their stupidity). But he found it simpler to allow his mind to be set at rest by Jupien's reassurances and, relieved to know that no one could hear them, he said, "I did not want to speak in front of that young man. He's a well meaning lad and does the best he can. But I don't find him brutal enough. I like his looks, but he calls me 'worthless trash' as if it was a lesson he had learned by heart." "Oh no, no one has taught him anything," replied Jupien, without realising the improbability of this assertion "Moreover, he was mixed up in the murder of a janitor's wife in La Villette." "Ah, that's rather interesting," remarked the Baron, with a smile. "But I happen to have that butcher here now," Jupien suggested, "the man from

the slaughterhouse who looks like Maurice; he just happened to drop in. Do you want to try him out?" "Oh yes, I'd be glad to," the Baron answered. I saw "the man from the slaughterhouse" come in. He did, as a matter of fact, look somewhat like "Maurice" but, what was still more peculiar, both of them had in their faces something of a type which I had never definitely formulated in my mind, but which I realised at that moment was to be discerned in Morel's face—or, if not in his face as I had always seen it, at any rate in a composite countenance which loving eyes, seeing Morel from a different angle, might have been able to compose out of his features. As soon as I had formed in my mind, from details drawn from my recollection of Morel, this model of what he might look like to someone else, I realised that these two young men, one of whom was a jeweller's errand boy and the other a hotel employee, were, in a way, successors to Morel. Should I infer from this that M. de Charlus, at least in one species of love affair, was always faithful to one uniform type of manly beauty and that the desire which had led him to select these young men, one after the other, was the same as that which had prompted him to accost Morel on the station platform at Doncières, and that all three of them resembled somewhat the Grecian youth whose figure, carved like a cameo in the sapphire of M. de Charlus's eyes, gave to his glance that strange something which had frightened *me the first day at Balbec?* Or was it that, his love for Morel having modified the type he sought, when he wished to console himself for Morel's absence, he selected men who resembled him? Another supposition I made was that perhaps there had never been between him and Morel, notwithstanding appearances, any relations other than those of mere friendship and that M. de Charlus had young men come to Jupien's who resembled Morel enough for him to have with them the illusion that he was enjoying pleasure with Morel. It is true that, considering all that M. de Charlus had done for Morel, this supposition would have

seemed rather improbable if one did not know that love drives us not only to the greatest sacrifices for the one we love, but sometimes even to the sacrifice of our desire itself (which, by the way, it becomes more difficult to satisfy in proportion as the loved one feels our love increase). Another thing which makes this supposition appear more probable than it seems at first glance (although doubtless it does not agree with the facts) is to be found in M. de Charlus's high-strung and profoundly passionate temperament, in which he resembled Saint-Loup and which may have played, at the beginning of his relations with Morel, the same rôle, although more refined and negative, as, in the case of Saint-Loup, at the beginning of his affair with Rachel One's relations with the woman one loves (and this can apply also to love for a young man) may remain platonic for quite another reason than the chastity of the woman or the non-sensual character of the love she inspires. This reason may be that the lover, too impatient through the very excess of his love, is not able to await with sufficient affectation of indifference the moment when he will obtain his desire. He keeps continually renewing his advances, he does not cease writing to his belovéd, he constantly seeks to see her, she refuses, he becomes desperate. From that moment she understands that, if she grants him her companionship, her friendship, these favours will appear already so great to one who had ceased to dare hope to obtain them that she can spare herself the trouble of granting anything further and confidently await the moment when, no longer able to endure not seeing her, he will be willing to end the war on any terms and she can impose a peace that shall have as its first condition a platonic relationship. Moreover, during all the time preceding this treaty, the lover, continually anxious and constantly on the lookout for a letter or even a glance, has finally ceased to think of physical possession, the desire for which tormented him at first but has now worn itself out with waiting and given place to needs of a different order, although still more painful if not satisfied.

Then the pleasure one had hoped, in the earlier days, to get from caresses is now enjoyed, although quite changed in character, in the form of friendly words and promises of companionship, which bring a delightful sense of relief after the strain of uncertainty—or sometimes merely after a chilly glance overcast with that mist of aloofness which seems to remove the loved one far beyond the hope of ever seeing her again. Woman divines all this instinctively and knows that she can indulge in the luxury of never surrendering herself to a man whose incurable desire for her she senses if he has been too high-strung to hide it from her at the start. She is only too happy to receive, without giving of her person, more than she usually obtains when she does. This is why extremely neurotic men believe in the chastity of their idol. And the halo they put around her head is also itself, although quite indirectly, as has been seen, a result of their excessive love. There is, then, in women what exists in an unconscious state in certain unwittingly crafty drugs, such as soporifics or morphine. The person to whom these drugs are indispensable is not he to whom they bring the delights of sleep or a genuine sensation of well-being. He is not the one who would purchase them for their weight in gold or in exchange for all he possesses, but that other addict—quite possibly, the same man, by the way, but changed with the lapse of time—to whom the drug no longer brings sleep or any voluptuous sensation, but who, when he does not have it, is a prey to a restlessness which he is determined to calm at any price, even at the cost of his life. As for M. de Charlus—whose case, on the whole, comes under the general laws of love, though with a slight allowance due to the two parties being of the same sex—it mattered not that he belonged to a family older than the Capetian dynasty, that he was wealthy and sought after in vain by exclusive society, while Morel was a nobody; he might even have said to Morel, as he had said to me, "I am a prince; I wish to promote your welfare"; Morel would still have the upper hand, provided he refused to surrender his person.

And for him to refuse, it was probably sufficient that he should feel himself loved. The same strong aversion which the great feel for "climbers" who wish to attach themselves to them at any cost, is felt by the virile man toward the sexual invert and by the woman for a too devoted lover. M. de Charlus not only had all the social advantages, but he would have made dazzling offers to Morel. Nevertheless, it is possible that all that might have been hurled in vain against the resistance of one man's will. In that case, it would have been with the Baron as with the Germans (to whom, anyhow, he belonged by his ancestry) who in the war going on at that moment were winning victories on every front, as the Baron was a little too fond of repeating, but of what use were their victories, since after each one they found the Allies more determined than ever to refuse the one thing the Germans would have liked to obtain, peace and reconciliation? In the same way Napoleon invaded Russia and then with a magnanimous gesture demanded that the authorities come before him. But no one appeared.

I went down the stairs and into the little lobby, where Maurice, uncertain whether he might be sent for again and under strict instructions from Jupien to wait, was engaged in a game of cards with one of his comrades They were all very much excited over a *croix de guerre* which had been found on the floor; no one knew who had lost it or whom to send it to in order to save the owner from getting into trouble. Then they discussed the heroism of an officer who had met death while trying to save his orderly. "Just the same, there are some fine people among the rich. I'd be glad to get shot for a guy like that," said Maurice, who evidently performed his terrible flagellations on the Baron only by a sort of mechanical habit, the result of a neglected upbringing, and through need of money and a preference for earning it in a way that was supposed to involve less effort than regular work—and perhaps involved more. But, as M. de Charlus had feared, he was probably kind-hearted and apparently a lad of admirable courage. He almost had

very well and was merely passing through the room rather far from us. But that unusual expression, *la belle Françoise*, which Albertine had never used in her life before, automatically betrayed its origin, Françoise felt that it had been uttered at random under an emotional stress and she understood everything without seeing anything and went out muttering in her patois the word "*poutana*." Another time, later on, when Bloch had raised a family and married off one of his daughters to a Catholic, an ill-bred gentleman remarked to her that he was under the impression someone had told him her father was a Jew and he asked what her maiden name was. In replying, the young woman, who had been "Mademoiselle Bloch" from birth, gave the name a German pronunciation, as the Duc de Guermantes would have done, that is to say, she pronounced the *ch*, not like *ck*, but like the Germanic guttural *ch*.

The manager (to come back to the scene at the hotel, into which the two Russians had finally decided to venture—"After all, what the devil do we care?") had not yet returned when Jupien came in to complain that they were talking too loud and the neighbors would object. But he stopped short with astonishment when he caught sight of me. "You fellows go out on the landing," he said. They were all getting up when I said to him, "It would be simpler if these young men stayed here and you and I stepped outside a minute." He followed me out, very much upset. I explained why I had come. You could hear patrons asking the manager if he could not get them a footman or a choir boy or a coloured chauffeur. All occupations were of interest to these old dotards, likewise all branches of the army and allies of all nationalities. Some asked specially for Canadians, perhaps unconsciously under the spell of their accent, so slight that one does not know whether it is that of Old France or of England. Because of their kilts, and because certain lacustrine dreams are often associated with desires of this sort, Scotchmen were at a premium. And, since each case of insanity takes on special characteristics,

and sometimes an exaggerated form, from its own peculiar circumstances, one old man who had satisfied all his curiosities asked insistently if they could not get him a mutilated soldier. We heard someone coming slowly down the stairs. With characteristic indiscretion, Jupien could not resist telling me that it was the Baron and that he must not see me under any circumstances but that, if I would step into the little room adjoining the lobby where the young men were sitting, he would open the peep-hole, a device which he had installed so that the Baron might be able to see and hear without being seen, but which he said he was now going to turn against the Baron for my benefit "Only don't budge!" And hurrying me into the dark room, he left me The truth is, he had no other room to give me, his hotel being full, notwithstanding the war. The one I had just given up had been taken by the Vicomte de Courvoisier, who, having been able to get away from the Red Cross at X for two days, had come to Paris for a little recreation before joining the Viscountess at their château, where he would explain to her that he had been unable to make the earlier train. He little suspected that M. de Charlus was only a few yards away from him, and the Baron suspected it just as little, since he had never met his cousin at Jupien's and the Viscount had been careful to conceal his identity from the latter. Soon the Baron came in, just as Jupien had said, but walking with some difficulty on account of his hurts, to which, however, he must have been accustomed. Although his indulgence was over and he was coming in merely to give Maurice the money he owed him, he looked around with a tender and inquisitive expression at the young men sitting there and evidently counted on having an entirely platonic but amorously prolonged chat with each one of them. I caught again, in the sprightly playfulness he exhibited before this harem which almost seemed to intimidate him, the little turns of the head and body and the coy glances which had struck me when he walked in that first evening at La Raspelière, graceful mannerisms inherited from some

grandmother I had never known, his resemblance to her being hidden in everyday life by a more virile expression, but coming expansively to the surface in the form of a coquettish desire to play the *grande dame* in certain situations where he wished to please a group of inferior social standing. Jupien had recommended these young men to the Baron's kindly interest, telling him they were all Belleville "toughs" and that any one of them would "do it" with his own sister for twenty francs. As to that, he lied and at the same time told the truth. Better and more humane than he admitted to the Baron, they were not a savage lot. But the very men who believed them to be so wicked would nevertheless talk to them with the utmost confidence, just as though these ruffians were worthy of it. A sadist may think he is talking to a murderer, but his ingenuous soul is not changed thereby and he is dumbfounded at the mendacity of these men, who are not murderers at all but want to "pick up a piece of change" in an easy manner, and who alternately kill off and resuscitate a father, a mother or a sister because they contradict themselves in their conversation with the "customer" whom they are trying to please. The "customer," in his *naïveté*, is struck dumb with astonishment, for, with his arbitrary conception of the gigolo, fascinated by the number of murders he believes him to have committed, he is dismayed by the lies and contradictions he discovers in his statements. Everyone seemed to know M. de Charlus and he stopped a long time with each of them, talking what he thought was their language, partly through pretentious affectation of local color, partly from a sadistic pleasure in contact with low life. "Look here, it's a shame! I saw you in front of the Olympia with a couple of broads. You wanted to pick up some jack. That's how faithful you are to me!" Fortunately, the young man to whom this was addressed did not have time to protest that he had never accepted "jack" from a woman, as this would have lessened M. de Charlus's thrill; he saved his protest for the end of the accusation,

declaring, "No indeed, I am never unfaithful to you." The word "unfaithful" gave M. de Charlus keen pleasure and as his real character shewed through in spite of himself underneath the one he affected, he turned to Jupien and said, "Isn't he a dear to tell me that! And how well he says it! You would almost think it was the truth. And, after all, what's the difference whether it's true or not, so long as he succeeds in making me believe it? What pretty little eyes he has! Here, I'm going to give you two big kisses to make it all right, my little fellow. Will you think of me when you're in the trenches? I hope it isn't too bad there?" "Hell, some days a hand grenade goes right past you" And the young man set to imitating the noises of the grenades, airplanes, etc. "But you have to take it the way the rest of them do, and you can be positively sure we'll go through with it to the end." "To the end! If we only knew to what end!" the pessimistic Baron said sadly. "Didn't you see in the newspapers that Sarah Bernhardt said, 'France will go through with it to the very end; the French will sooner die to a man'?" "I do not doubt for one instant that the French will die bravely to the very last man," assented M. de Charlus, as if that were the simplest thing in the world to do, although he himself had no intention of doing anything of the kind but merely thought in that way to offset the impression of pacifism he gave when he forgot himself. "I don't doubt it at all, only I wonder how far *Madame* Sarah Bernhardt is qualified to speak in the name of France. Ah, I don't seem to know this charming, delightful young man," he interrupted, noticing one whom he did not recognise or, perhaps, had never seen before. He greeted him as he would have greeted a prince at Versailles, and, in order to seize the opportunity to get a little extra pleasure gratis (just as, when I was little and my mother had given an order at Boissier's or Gouache's, a saleswoman would offer me a bonbon from one of the glass jars she presided over) he took the "charming" young man's hand, held it firmly for a long time, Prussian fashion, and smilingly

looked him straight in the eye for the interminable "minute" the photographers used to make us hold a pose on days when the light was poor. "My dear sir," he said, "I am charmed, enchanted, to make your acquaintance. He has lovely hair!" he remarked, turning to Jupien. Then he went over to Maurice and gave him his fifty francs, first taking him around the waist and saying, "You never told me you had bumped off a janitor's wife in Belleville." And M. de Charlus chortled with ecstasy and put his face close to Maurice's. "Oh, Monsieur le Baron," protested the gigolo, whom Jupien had forgotten to coach on this point, "how can you believe such a thing?"—either because it was not true or because, although true, he considered it abominable and the sort of thing one should disavow. "What! I lay hands on my fellow man? Now a Boche, that's different, because it's in war, but a woman, and an old woman besides!" This declaration of virtuous principles acted like a cold shower on the Baron, who drew away brusquely, handing Maurice his money, however, though with the disgruntled air of someone who has been "gypped" but pays reluctantly, rather than make a scene.

The unpleasant impression this incident had produced on the Baron was made still worse by the way the beneficiary thanked him for the money, saying, "I'm going to send this to my dear old father and mother and I'll keep some for my brother who is at the front." These touching sentiments disappointed M. de Charlus almost as much as the rather stereotyped peasant phraseology exasperated him. Jupien occasionally warned the young men to be more "hard-boiled." Then one of them, with the air of confessing something diabolical, hazarded the following: "I say, Baron, you may not believe it but, when I was a kid, I used to look through the keyhole and watch my father and mother embracing one another. That was naughty, wasn't it? You probably think I'm stuffing you, but I swear it's just as I tell you." And M. de Charlus was both discouraged and exasperated by this forced attempt to seem perverted which

resulted only in disclosing so much stupidity and innocence. But the most desperate robber or murderer would not have satisfied him, because such men don't talk of their deeds; besides, there is in the sadist, no matter how kindly he may be—in fact, directly in proportion to his kindliness—a thirst for wickedness which the wicked cannot satisfy because they act with a different purpose in view.

It was no use for the young man, realizing too late the mistake he had made, to say he had no use for the cops and to carry his audacity so far as to say to the Baron, "Say, gimme a date, will you?"; the spell was broken. You felt that it was "faked," as in the books of writers who make an effort to use slang. It was in vain the young man described in detail all the obscenities he indulged in with his girl. M. de Charlus was merely struck to see how little variety there was in these obscenities. And this was not just an insincere conclusion. Nothing is more limited in its range than sexual pleasure and vice. In this sense, changing the meaning of the phrase, it can truly be said that one turns constantly in a vicious circle.

"How unpretentious he is! You'd never take him for a prince," some of the habitués said when M. de Charlus had gone out, accompanied to the foot of the stairs by Jupien, to whom the Baron did not stop complaining about the young man's too virtuous character. From the dissatisfied air of Jupien, who must have drilled him beforehand, one realized that the pseudo-murderer was going to

a kindly nature and he expresses feelings of respect for his family." "Still, he's on bad terms with his father," Jupien objected, taken unawares. "They live together, but they work in different bars." This was obviously a rather mild crime as compared with murder, but Jupien had been caught unprepared. The Baron added nothing further for, even though he wished his pleasures to be prepared for him,

he wanted to be able to persuade himself that they were not rehearsed. "He's a real bandit. He said what he did just to fool you. You're too naive," added Jupien, to clear himself, but succeeding only in ruffling M. de Charlus's pride.

At the same time that they thought the Baron a prince, the people in the establishment on the other hand regretted very much the death of a man about whom the gigolos said, "I don't know his name but it seems he's a baron"; he was none other than the Prince de Foux, father of Saint-Loup's friend. Giving his wife to believe that he spent a great deal of his time at the club, in reality he passed many an hour at Jupien's, gossiping and telling society tales before a lot of young hoodlums. He was a tall, fine-looking man, like his son It is surprising that M de Charlus, perhaps because he had always known the Prince socially, was unaware that they had the same tastes. People even went so far as to hint that the Prince had some years before been in the habit of gratifying them at the expense of his own son (Saint-Loup's friend) still a high-school lad, but this was probably false. On the contrary, unusually well informed as to certain habits which many people know nothing about, he was very watchful as to whom his son associated with One day, when a poorly dressed man followed the young Prince de Foux home and tossed a note in through the window, the father picked it up. Although the intruder was not in the same class with the elder M. de Foux socially, he was from another point of view, so that he had no trouble finding among their respective partners in vice an intermediary who stopped the Prince from doing anything about the matter by proving to him that it was the young lad who had instigated this audacity on the part of the older man. And that was quite possible. For the Prince [illegible], son from evil [illegible]. As to that, [illegible] ·pt this side of his character hidden from the people of his own social class,

although he went further than anyone else with people of another class.

"They say he has a million francs a day to throw away," remarked the twenty-two-year-old, to whom this statement did not appear at all improbable. Soon they heard the rumble of the taxi coming for M. de Charlus. At that instant I caught sight of a person who looked like an elderly lady in a black skirt, coming slowly out of a nearby room, evidently accompanied by a soldier. I soon saw my mistake, it was a priest—that thing so rare and in France absolutely exceptional, a priest of evil character It was evident that the soldier was chaffing his companion on the discrepancy between his clerical garb and his unclerical conduct, for the priest, raising a finger to his hideous face with the grave gesture of a doctor of theology, said sententiously, "What do you expect? I am not"—I thought he was going to say "a saint"—"an angel" Having finished the matter he had come for, he left, saying good-bye to Jupien, who was just returning from seeing the Baron to the door, but the depraved old priest absent-mindedly forgot to pay for his room, so Jupien, who never lost his wits, rattled the box in which he put each guest's money, and called out, "Something to help carry on the good work, M l'abbé?" The wretched character apologised, dropped in his contribution and disappeared Jupien then came to let me out of the black hole, where I had not dared move a muscle. "Just step for a moment into the lobby, where my young lads are sitting around, while I go upstairs and lock the room. Since you're a lodger, it will look all right" The manager was there, so I paid him for my room. At the same moment a young man in a dinner jacket came in and with an air of authority asked the manager, "Can I have Léon to-morrow morning at a quarter to eleven, instead of eleven o'clock, because I'm lunching downtown?" "That depends how long the abbé keeps him," was the reply. This did not appear to satisfy the young man, who seemed on the point of saying some uncomplimentary things about the abbé,

but his anger took another turn when he caught sight of me. Walking right up to the manager, he muttered in a low but enraged voice, "Who is that over there? What kind of business are you up to?" The manager, greatly embarrassed, explained that my being there was of no importance, that I was just a lodger. The young man did not appear pacified by this explanation, for he continued to mutter, "It is extremely disagreeable. Such things should not be allowed to occur. You know I don't like it at all If you keep this up, I'll never set foot in this place again." The carrying out of this threat did not appear very imminent, however, for, when he left, although still angry, he directed that Léon try to be free at a quarter before eleven, or even ten-thirty if possible. Jupien came back to get me and walked to the door with me. "I wouldn't want you to misjudge me," he said. "This house doesn't bring me in as much money as you think. I have to have some respectable lodgers, although it's true, if I depended on them, I'd be losing money all the time. Here it's the opposite to the Carmelites, it's thanks to vice that virtue is able to exist. No, the reason I took this house—or, rather, the reason I had the manager you saw take it—was simply to do a favour to the Baron and make his last years pass pleasantly." Jupien had in mind more than merely sadistic scenes such as I had just witnessed and also the practice of the Baron's special vice. Even just for someone to talk to, to keep him company and to play cards with, the Baron was no longer contented with any but common people, who exploited him. Trying to imitate the ways of the rabble is obviously quite as comprehensible as snobbishness. Both traits had, moreover, long been combined alternately in the character of M. de Charlus, who did not consider anyone quite aristocratic enough for his social intercourse, nor near enough to the *apache* for his other contacts. "I detest half-way types," he used to say. "Middle-class comedy is stilted. I must have either the princesses of classic tragedy or the broad farce of the common people. *Phèdre* or the clowns—nothing

in between!" But finally the balance between these two inclinations was destroyed. Whether through weariness of old age or the extension of his sensuality to even the most commonplace relationships, the Baron now passed his life entirely among social inferiors, thus, without knowing it, continuing the tradition of not a few of his illustrious ancestors, the Duc de La Rochefoucauld, the Prince d'Harcourt, the Duc de Berry, whom Saint-Simon pictures to us as spending their lives among their lackeys, who extorted huge sums of money from them, taking a hand in their games, to such a [illegible]

[illegible]

Jupien went on, "because, you see, the Baron is just a big [illegible]

[illegible]

didn't he frighten a hotel doorman almost to death just the other day by offering him a large sum of money to come home with him? Home with him! What a reckless thing to do! The fellow, although he cares only for women, was reassured when he understood what was wanted of him. When he heard all the promises of money, he took the Baron for a spy, and he felt much relieved when he learned that he was being asked to sell, not his fatherland, but his person— [illegible] dangerous a [illegible] Jupien, I [illegible] M. de Charlus is not a novelist or a poet, not in order to describe what he sees; but a man like Charlus has reached such a point in his sexual life that scandals arise all around him, he is forced to take life seriously and put emotion into his pleasures, he is prevented from settling down permanently into an ironic, objective view of things; there is an unbroken stream of suffering running through his life. Nearly every

time he makes advances to someone, he has to undergo humiliating insult, if not the risk of prison. The training of poets, as of children, is accomplished by cuffs and blows. If M. de Charlus had been a novelist, the house that Jupien had set up for him, cutting down the risks to such an extent (at least—for a raid by the police was always to be feared—the risks with regard to individuals, whose attitude the Baron could not be sure of if he accosted them in the street) would have been a misfortune for him. But M. de Charlus was only a dilettante in art and had no idea of doing any writing nor any talent in that direction. "What's more," Jupien continued, "let me confess to you that I don't feel any great scruples about making money in this way. As for what goes on here, I can no longer conceal from you that I like it, that it's the chief pleasure in life for me. Now, is there any law against accepting pay for things one does not consider wrong? You're better educated than I am and you will doubtless tell me that Socrates did not believe he should accept money for his lessons, but in our day professors of philosophy do not feel that way about it, nor doctors, nor painters, nor playwrights, nor theatre directors. Don't get the idea that this business brings you in touch only with the dregs of society. It is true, the manager of an establishment of this sort is like a high-grade prostitute; he receives [illegible] kind, who are gen- [illegible] he finest, most sensi- [illegible] This house, let me [illegible] formed into a headquarters for wit and a news bureau." But I was still preoccupied with thinking about the blows I had seen M. de Charlus receiving. And to tell the truth, if one knew him well, how proud he was, how satiated with social pleasures, [illegible]

ing him to marry his daughter to a duke and invite lords [illegible]

ladies to his hunting parties, M. de Charlus was glad to possess because it made it possible for him to have control over one, perhaps several establishments where young men were always available for his enjoyment. Perhaps it would have been so even without the Baron's vice He was the descendant of so many great noblemen, princes of the blood or dukes about whom Saint-Simon tells that they associated with no one who could be named "Meanwhile," I said to Jupien, "this house is very different from that, it is worse than an insane asylum, since the madness of the inmates here is staged, reconstructed and exhibited; it's a veritable pandemonium. I thought, like the caliph in the *Arabian Nights*, that I had arrived just in time to rescue a man who was being beaten, and it was another story drawn from the *Arabian Nights* that I saw enacted before my eyes, that of an old woman changed into a dog, who gets someone to beat her so that she may regain her original form." Jupien seemed greatly disturbed by my words, because he realised that I had seen the Baron being beaten. He was silent for a moment; then, with that happy faculty which had so frequently struck me in that self-made man when he would find such gracious words with which to greet Françoise and me in the courtyard of our house, he said, "You have mentioned various tales from the *Arabian Nights*, but I know one that has a certain connexion with the title of a book I believe I noticed at the Baron's." He was alluding to a translation of Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* which I had sent to M. de Charlus. "If you ever have a fancy some evening to see—I won't say forty, but ten thieves, you need only come here. To know whether I am in, just look up there; I leave my little window open and lighted up; that means that I am here and one may enter. That is *my* 'sesame.' I say only 'sesame.' As for the lilies, if that's what you're after, I would advise you to seek them elsewhere." Whereupon, he bade me good-night in a rather offhand manner, for an aristocratic clientèle and a gang of young men whom he led like a pirate chief had developed in him a certain familiarity.

He had scarcely left me when the siren shrieked forth, followed at once by a violent barrage fire. We could feel that the German airplane was very near, hovering just over our heads, and suddenly the noise of a powerful explosion shewed that it had dropped one of its bombs.

In Jupien's hotel, a number of men who did not wish to flee had all come together in the same room. They were not mutually acquainted, but still they were all of about the same social standing, wealthy and aristocratic. There was something repugnant in the appearance of each of them, probably due to indulgence in degrading forms of enjoyment. One of them, an enormous man, had a face all covered with red splotches, like a drunkard's. I had been told that at the start he was not a heavy drinker, but merely amused himself making younger men drink. Finally, alarmed at the thought of being draft[illegible]) being very stout, [illegible]dly in order to try [illegible] kilos, at which figure a man was exempted. Now, this deliberate procedure having developed into an incurable habit, wherever one might leave him and no matter how long one watched over him, he always wound up in a wineshop. But the moment he began to talk, one could see that, though of mediocre intelligence, he was a man of knowledge, breeding and culture. Another man from the upper ranks of society had also come in, this one very young and of strikingly handsome physique. In his case, as a matter of fact, there were as yet no outward marks of vicious habits but, what was even more disquieting, there were inner indications. Very tall and with a charming countenance, his manner of speaking revealed an intelligence that was, without exaggeration, really remarkable and quite different from that of his alcoholic neighbour. And yet every remark he made was accompanied by a facial expression suited to something entirely different. As though he had been endowed with the entire range of human facial expressions but had grown up in another world, he brought them out in the wrong order

and seemed to scatter smiles and glances about him at random, without any relation to what was being said For his sake, I hope (if he is still alive, as is doubtless the case) that he was at that time under the influence, not of a chronic malady, but merely of a temporary intoxication. It is probable that, if you had asked these men for their calling cards, you would have been surprised to find that they were all of high social position. But one vice or another—and that greatest vice of all, lack of will power, which makes it impossible to resist any of the others—brought them together there, in separate rooms, it is true, but every single evening, I am told, so that, although society women knew their names, they had gradually lost sight of them and never had an opportunity to entertain them at their homes any more. The men still received social invitations, but habit always brought them back to their common rendezvous of vice. Moreover, they made little secret of it, in contrast to the young porters, workingmen and such like who served for their pleasures. And that is easily understood for this reason, besides many others one can readily imagine For a workingman or servant to go to that place was just about as bad as for a supposedly respectable woman to go to a house of assignation. Some men who admitted having gone there once denied vigorously having ever gone back again, and Jupien, lying either to save their reputations or to avoid competition, would declare, "Oh no, he doesn't come to my place, he wouldn't be willing to." For men of standing it is not so serious, especially as their social equals who do not go to such places do not know what they are like and, anyway, do not inquire into other people's private lives.

I had left Jupien's place at the first signal of alarm. The streets had become entirely dark, except that now and then one of the enemy's aviators, flying rather low, would throw a light on the spot where he wished to drop a bomb. While trying to find my way, I recalled the day when, en route to La Raspelière, I had met a god, as it were, an airplane, which made my horse rear up. This time I though• the en-

counter would be of a different sort and the god of evil would slay me. I hurried to escape, like the traveller overtaken by a tidal wave; I groped about the dark squares, trying to discover an exit. Finally the flames from a building on fire threw light on the scene and I was able to see the way to go, the anti-aircraft guns crackling incessantly the while. But my thoughts had turned to another subject. I was thinking of Jupien's hotel, perhaps now reduced to ashes (for a bomb had fallen in the immediate neighbourhood just after I had left the place)—that building on which M. de Charlus might well have placed the prophetic inscription *Sodoma*, as did some unknown inhabitant of Pompeii with no less foresight, or perhaps after the eruption had begun and when the catastrophe was already under way. But of what importance were siren and Gothas to the men who had come seeking their pleasure? Seldom do we take any note of the social setting or the natural surroundings in which our love affairs are placed. The tempest rages at sea, the ship rolls in every direction, torrents of rain, whipped by the wind, pour down from the sky; we give heed for just an instant—and then only to protect ourselves against some inconvenience it is causing us—to the immense scene in which we and the be- [illegible]

from the morbid fear that had long been persecuting them. For it is a mistake to think that fears correspond in intensity to the dangers that inspire them. One can be afraid of not being able to sleep and yet not at all afraid of a dangerous duel, afraid of a rat and not of a lion. For some hours the police would be fully occupied with trying to save the lives of the inhabitants of Paris—such an unimportant matter—and would not be liable to involve these gentlemen in a compromising raid.

Some of the habitués were tempted—even more than by this release from fear—by the darkness which had suddenly

come over the streets. Several of these Pompeians, on whom the fire of heaven was alr the passageways of the as black as catacombs T they would not be alone there. Now, the darkness which envelopes everything like a new element produces a result peculiarly tempting for certain people—it does away with the first stage in the process of sexual approach and makes it possible to attain right at the very beginning a degree of intimacy usually reached only after considerable time. And, in truth, whether the coveted one be a woman or a man, even supposing the approach to be simple and free from the flirtatious maneuvering that would drag out interminably in a parlour (at least in the daytime), in the evening, even in the most dimly lighted street, there is a preliminary period when the eyes alone devour the expected feast, when the fear of passers-by and even uncertainty as to the desired one prevents anything more than glances and words. But in the darkness all that "old stuff" is done away with; the hands, the lips, the bodies can come into play right from the start. And, if one is rebuffed, there is always the excuse of the darkness and the mistakes it gives rise to If, however, one's advances are welcomed, this instant response, the body that does not draw back but comes closer suggests to us that she—or he—whom we are silently courting is without restraint and corrupted with vice, a thought that augments the pleasure of biting right into the forbidden fruit without first looking at it with coveting eyes or even asking permission. Meanwhile the darkness continues Engulfed in this strange element, Jupien's habitués felt as if they had travelled far and come to witness some natural phenomenon, such as a tidal wave or an eclipse; relishing, in place of the usual prepared and sedentary pleasure, the tang of a chance meeting in the midst of the great unknown, they celebrated secret rites in the darkness of the catacombs, as in some Pompeian place of ill repute, to the accompaniment of the volcanic thunder of the bombs. The Pompeian paintings at Jupien's,

by the way, recalling, as they did, the latter part of the French Revolution, were very appropriate to the period so similar to the Directoire upon which we were then entering. Already anticipating the end of the war, new styles of danc- [illegible] madly [illegible] kness in [illegible] Along with this, certain artistic opinions, less anti-Germanic than during the early years of the war, were becoming current and bringing a breath of air to stifled minds, but a certificate of good citizenship was necessary before one dared give voice to them. A professor wrote a remarkable book on Schiller, which was reviewed in the newspapers; but, before mentioning the book, it was recorded, as a sort of licence to print, that the author was at the Battle of the Marne, at Verdun, that he had been cited for bravery five times and had lost two sons in the war, after which they went on to praise the clarity and penetration of his work on Schiller, whom it was permissible to call "great," provided one said "great Boche," instead of "great German" The same rule held for the article and then it was allowed to pass.

As I drew near my home, I was reflecting how quickly consciousness can cease to play any part in our habits, leaving them free to develop without interference or control, and how astonished we can be to study—simply from the outside and on the supposition that they involve the entire person—the actions of some men whose mental or moral qualities may be developing independently and in quite a different direction. It was evidently a defect in early training, or a lack of any training at all, combined with a penchant for earning money in the least painful way possible or, at any rate, in the least laborious manner—for there must be many kinds of work that are pleasanter, all things considered (but does not the sick man, for example, construct for himself with privations and remedies an existence far more painful than it would be made by the ailment, often slight, against which he imagines he is struggling in this manner?) that had

led the young speak, and foı them no pleas most repugnant. Judged by their actions, one might have considered them thoroughly bad, but not only did they prove themselves in the war to be marvellous soldiers, incomparably brave, but in civil life they were frequently good-hearted fellows, if not altogether good citizens. They had long since ceased to judge what was moral or immoral in the life they were leading, because it was the life of everyone around them. In like manner, when we study certain periods of ancient history, we are astonished to see some persons whom we know to have been kind as individuals, take part without scruple in massacres and human sacrifices which probably seemed to them perfectly natural He who reads the history of our times two thousand years hence will doubtless consider in just the same way that our epoch allowed pure and tender consciences to dwell in an environment to which they adjusted, it is true, but which to him will appear to have been unspeakably pernicious. On the other hand, I did not know a man who was as richly endowed with intelligence and sensibility as Jupien, for that delightful fund of knowledge which constituted the intellectual fabric of his conversation did not come to him from any of that school or university education which might have made a remarkable man of him but from which so many sons of fashionable families get no benefit at all. It was his pure, inborn good sense, his innate good taste which had enabled him, out of occasional random reading in odd moments, without a guide, to develop that correct way of expressing himself in which one found all the symmetries of the language in their full beauty. And yet, the profession he was engaged in, while one of the most lucrative, it is true, could rightly be judged the most ignoble of all. As for M. de Charlus, whatever scorn for gossip his aristocratic pride may have given him, how could his sense of personal dignity and self-respect have failed to deny to his sensual inclinations certain indulgences

the only possible excuse for which would seem to be utter insanity? But in his case, as in Jupien's, the habit of excluding considerations of morality from a whole category of acts (something which, by the way, must occur in other functions as well, such as judge, statesman and many more besides) must have been formed so long before that, without ever consulting his moral sense any longer, it had become more and more strongly developed, until the day when this willing Prometheus had had himself chained by Force to the rock of pure Matter. I realised, of course, that this was a new phase of M. de Charlus's malady, which, since I had become aware of it, judging by the various stages I had witnessed, had gone through its evolution with increasing speed. The poor Baron could not now be very far from the end of it all, death, if, indeed, this was not preceded, in accordance with the prediction and hope of Mme. Verdurin, by an infection which itself at his age could only hasten his demise. And yet perhaps it was inaccurate to say "the rock of pure Matter." On the surface of this matter it is possible that a little intelligence was still discernible. This madman, despite his aberration, was well aware that he was mad, that at such times he was a victim of insanity, since he understood clearly that the lad who beat him was no more to be blamed than little boys playing "soldier" who choose one of their number by lot to be "the Prussian" and they all throw themselves on him in a passion of real patriotism and pretended hate. But in this insanity of which he was a victim there was also an element of M. de Charlus's own peculiar personality. Even in its aberrations, as also in our loves and travels, human nature still betrays the need of faith by its insistence on truth. When I mentioned to Françoise a church in Milan—a city she would probably never visit—or the Cathedral of Rheims, or even that of Arras, which she could not see because they had been more or less destroyed, she would envy the rich, who can treat themselves to the sight of such treasures, and would exclaim, with regretful longing, "Ah, how beautiful that must have been!" And

yet, in all the years she had been living in Paris, she had never had the curiosity to go to see Notre-Dame That was just because Notre-Dame was part of Paris, of the city in which her daily life unfolded itself and in which, consequently, it was difficult for our old servant to place the objects of her dreams—just as it would have been for me if the study of architecture had not corrected in me some of the instincts I had formed at Combray. In anyone we love there is always present some dream that we cannot always discern but which we constantly seek to attain. It was my faith in Bergotte and Swann which had made me love Gilberte, just as it was my belief in Gilbert the Bad which had made me love Mme. de Guermantes. And what a wide expanse of unfathomable ocean was set apart in my love for Albertine, painful, jealous and individual though that love was! Moreover, just on account of this individual quality which we pursue with such eagerness, our love for someone else is already somewhat of an aberration. And even our physical ailments, at any rate those which affect the nervous system rather closely, are they not in a way special preferences or phobias developed by our organs and our bony structure, which thus discover that they have contracted for certain climates an aversion as tenacious and inexplicable as the fancy some men shew for women who wear eyeglasses or for female circus-riders? The desire that is aroused each time at the sight of a woman circus-rider, who will ever say with what persistent, unconscious dream it is connected, as unconscious and mysterious, for example, as is the influence which one who has suffered all his life from asthmatic attacks may suddenly feel in some city, apparently the same as all the others, but where for the first time he breathes freely?

Now, aberrations are like love affairs in which the morbid condition has spread and affected the entire being. Even in the maddest of them, the underlying love can still be discerned. At the bottom of M. de Charlus's insistence that they put chains of tested strength on his wrists and ankles

and attach him to an iron bar—with other ferocious devices which Jupien told me they had the greatest difficulty in obtaining even with the aid of sailors, for they were used to inflict punishments which custom has abolished even where discipline is the harshest, namely, on shipboard—at the bottom of that was to be found M. de Charlus's dream of a virility proven by brutal tests, if need be, and all the rich store of medieval scenes, crucifixions and feudal tortures which his imagination treasured, invisible to us, but reflecting themselves in his acts, as we have seen. It was in the same spirit that he would say to Jupien each time he arrived, "There isn't going to be any alarm this evening, anyhow, for I can just imagine how I would look burnt to a crisp by that fire from heaven, like an inhabitant of Sodom!" And he pretended to dread the Gothas, not because he really felt the slightest fear of them, but in order to have an excuse, the moment the sirens sounded, to hurry down into the underground stations, where he hoped to get some pleasure from passing contacts in the dark, with vague dreams of the dungeons and subterranean chambers of the middle ages. In short, his desire to be chained up and beaten, for all its ugliness, betrayed in him a dream as poetic as does in other persons the desire to go to Venice or to keep a chorus girl as a mistress. And M. de Charlus was so determined that this dream should give him the illusion of reality that Jupien had had to sell the wooden bed that was in Room 14A * and put in its place an iron bed, which harmonised better with the chains.

The *berloque* finally sounded just as I was reaching the house. It was like an urchin's commentary on the noise of the firemen. I met Françoise just coming up out of the cellar with the butler. She thought I was dead. She told me Saint-Loup had come in for a moment, with apologies, to see if he had dropped his *croix de guerre* during the visit he had made me that morning, for he had just noticed that he had lost it and, as he was to rejoin his regiment the next

* The French text reads "43."—*F.A.B.*

morning, he wanted at any cost to see if it was at my house. He had searched everywhere, with the help of Françoise, but had not found it. Françoise was sure he must have lost it before coming to see me, for, she said, it seemed to her—in fact, she would have sworn he did not have it on when she saw him. In which she was mistaken. This shews the value of testimony and of recollections. I may add that I sensed at once, from the unenthusiastic way they spoke of him, that Saint-Loup had made a rather poor impression on Françoise and the butler. It is quite true that, whereas the butler's son and Françoise's nephew had done everything possible to evade military service, Saint-Loup had made every possible effort, and with success, to be detailed where the danger was greatest. But Françoise and the butler could not believe that, judging him by themselves. They were convinced that the rich always get under cover. Besides, even if they had known the truth about Robert's heroic courage, they would not have been moved by it. He did not use the word "Boches," he had once spoken to them admiringly of the bravery of the Germans, he did not attribute it to treachery that we had not been victorious the very first day That, now, is what they would have liked to hear; that would have seemed to them an indication of courage. So, though they were continuing to hunt for the *croix de guerre*, I, who suspected where it had probably been lost, found them cool on the subject of Robert. But, if it was true that he had that evening indulged in the form of pleasure I supposed, it was only a temporary stop-gap, for, taken

far he had received only hundreds of contradictory replies. I advised Françoise and the butler to go to bed. But the latter was never in a hurry to leave Françoise, now that he had found, thanks to the war, a more effective way to torment her than by mentioning the expulsion of the nuns and the Dreyfus case. That evening and every time I went near

them during the few days more that I remained in Paris, I heard the butler saying to the terrified Françoise, "They're in no hurry, it's easy to see why; they're waiting till the pear's ripe; but, when it is, they'll take Paris, and that day there'll be no mercy shewn!" "Oh, Lord God and the Virgin Mary!" Françoise cried out, "they're not satisfied with having conquered poor Belgium. She suffered good and plenty when she was invasioned." "Belgium, Françoise! Why, what they did to Belgium isn't a circumstance to what they'll do here." And even the war having introduced into the conversation of the common people a quantity of expressions which they knew only by sight, through the newspapers, the pronunciation of which, consequently, they did not know, he added, "You'll see, Françoise, they're preparing to break through at the Saint-Mihiel 'sallient'." At this I revolted, if not out of pity for Françoise and in the name of military common sense, at least in behalf of the French language, and I declared that the word should be pronounced "salient," but all I accomplished was to cause the terrifying remark to be repeated to Françoise every time I entered the kitchen, for the butler not only enjoyed frightening his fellow servant, but was almost as glad to shew his master that, though formerly a mere gardener in Combray and now just a butler—but a real Frenchman notwithstanding, according to the rule of Saint-André-des-Champs—the Declaration of the Rights of Man gave him the right to pronounce it "sallient" in complete independence and not take any orders on a point which was not part of his duties and on which, consequently, since the French Revolution no one had any business to say [illegible]
So I had the mortificati[illegible]
about the Saint-Mihiel [illegible]
was intended to shew me that this pronunciation was not the result of ignorance, but of a carefully considered determination. He combined the government and the newspapers in one general distrustful "they," saying, for example, "They talk to us about the losses of the Boches, but they don't say

anything about our own, which, it seems, are ten times as heavy. They tell us the other fellows are at the end of their rope and that they have nothing left to eat, but as for me, I believe they have a hundred times as much as we have. Anyhow, it isn't right to pull the wool over our eyes. If they had nothing to eat, they wouldn't fight the way they did the other day, when they killed a hundred thousand of our boys under twenty." He constantly exaggerated the German victories in this way, just as he used to do with the successes of the radicals; at the same time he would tell of their atrocities, in order that these victories might be more painful. Fr[illegible] kept crying out "Ah, Holy Mother [illegible]

see that we're going to get everybody against us and we'll have to fight all the other nations"—when it was exactly the opposite. The days when the news was good, he got his revenge by assuring her the war would go on for thirty-five years and, to provide for the possibility of peace, he insisted that this would not last more than a few months and would be followed by battles compared with which those we were [illegible]

Allies seemed at that time, if not very near, at any rate al[illegible] admitted that the [illegible] duced the [illegible] hand war [illegible] was, how[illegible] a person whom one nevertheless enjoys exasperating every day by defeating him at dominoes) victory presented itself to his eyes under the guise of the first conversation, in which he would have the sorrow of hearing Françoise say to him, "It's over at last and they're going to have to give us more than we gave them in 1870." Moreover, he thought all

along that *this inevitable culmination* was about to arrive, for an unconscious patriotism made him believe, along with the entire French people, victims of the same mirage as I was since the beginning of my illness, that victory, like my recovery, would come the following day. He anticipated this by announcing to Françoise that this victory might possibly come about but that it would make her heart bleed because it would be followed by the Revolution and then the invasion. "Oh, this damned war! The Boches will be the only ones to get over it quickly, Françoise; they have already made hundreds of millions out of it. But to imagine they will cough up a penny to us, what a joke! Perhaps they'll say so in the newspapers," he added as a precaution, to provide against any contingency, "to calm the people, just as they have been telling us for the past three years that the war was going to end the following day. I can't understand how people are such fools as to believe it." Françoise was all the more disturbed by these remarks because, as a matter of fact, after having believed the optimists instead of the butler she saw that the war, which she had expected would be over in two weeks, in spite of "poor Belgium" being "invasioned," was still going on and that nobody was advancing because of the permanent digging in on each side—a phenomenon the meaning of which she did not grasp—and finally because one of the countless "godsons" to whom she gave all she earned with us told her that one fact and another had been withheld from the public. "This will all fall on the workingman's back," the butler concluded. "They will take your field away from you, Françoise." "O Lord!" exclaimed Françoise. But instead of these far away misfortunes, he preferred more imminent ones and he devoured the newspapers, in the hope of being able to report a defeat to Françoise. He would hunt for bad news as for Easter eggs, hoping that things would go badly enough to frighten Françoise but not badly enough to make him suffer materially. Thus a Zeppelin raid, for example, would have delighted him with the spectacle of Françoise hiding i

the cellar and because he was convinced that, in a city the size of Paris, the bombs would not come and fall precisely on our house. Françoise, to tell the truth, was beginning to relapse at times into the pacifism she shewed at Combray. She almost doubted the truth of "German atrocities." "At the beginning of the war," she remarked, "they told us the Germans were murderers, brigands, real bandits—Bbboches, in short." If she put several *b's* before "Boches," it was because the accusation that the Germans were murderers [illegible]

mysteriously frightful meaning she assigned to the word "Boche," because she was speaking of the beginning of the war and also on account of the air of uncertainty with which she uttered the word. For the doubt whether the Germans were criminals, even though it might be ill-founded in fact, did not contain within itself any contradiction from the point of view of logic; but how could one doubt that they were Boches, since this word in popular language means precisely "Germans." Perhaps she was merely reproducing in another form the violent remarks she had heard early in the war, in which the word "Boche" was stressed with special force. "I used to believe all that," she said, "but I'm beginning to wonder if we aren't as big a lot of rascals as they." The seed of this blasphemous thought had been slyly sown in her mind by the butler, who, seeing that she had a soft spot in her heart for King Constantine of Greece, kept picturing him to her as being deprived of food by France in order to make him give up. In consequence of this, his abdication had moved her deeply, so that she even went so far as to say, "We're no better than they; if we were in Germany, we'd be doing just the same." I saw very little of her anyhow those last few days, for she went often to visit those cousins about whom my mother once said to me, "But you know, they are richer than you." We witnessed at this period something so fine, so common throughout the coun-

try, that it would serve, if there were a historian to perpetuate the memory of it, as lasting evidence of the greatness of France, of her greatness of soul, of her greatness according to the standard of Saint-André-des-Champs, a greatness shewn in their lives by many civilians behind the lines, no less than by the soldiers who fell at the Marne. One of Françoise's nephews, who was killed at Berry-au-Bac, was the nephew also of those millionaire cousins of Françoise, former café owners who had made their fortune and retired a long time before. The nephew, also a café proprietor, but in a small way and with very limited means, had been drafted at the age of twenty-five and had left his young wife alone to run the little bar which he expected to come back to in a few months. But he was killed. And then this is what we saw. The millionaire cousins, who were no relation to the young widow, left the country place to which they had retired ten years before and went to work again in the café business, but refused to accept a sou for their labour; at six o'clock every morning, the millionaire wife, a real lady, and her young lady daughter were dressed and ready to help their niece-in-law and cousin-by-marriage. And for more than three years, they had been rinsing glasses in this way and serving drinks from early morning till half-past nine at night, without a single day of rest. In this book of mine, in which there is not one fact that is not imaginary, nor any real person concealed under a false name, where everything has been invented by me to meet the needs of my story, I ought to say in praise of my country that, at any rate, these millionaire relatives of Françoise, who gave up their retired life in order to help their niece when she was left without support, are people who really are alive and, convinced that their modesty will not take offence because they will never read this book, it gives me a childlike pleasure and deep emotion to record here their real name, Larivière—a truly French name, moreover—regretting only that I cannot give the names of thousands of others who must have acted in a similar manner and through whom France survived. If

there were some miserable slackers like the lordly young man in dinner jacket whom I saw at Jupien's, whose sole concern was to know whether he could have Léon at half-past ten "because he was lunching downtown," they are compensated for by the countless thousands of Frenchmen of Saint-André-des-Champs and by all the magnificent soldiers, to whom I liken the Larivière family. To heighten Françoise's anxiety, the butler would shew her old numbers of *Lectures pour Tous,* dating from before the war, which he had found and which shewed on their covers "The German Imperial Family." "There's our future lord and master," he would say to Françoise, pointing to "Guillaume." She would stare open-eyed, then turn to the female figure beside the Emperor and say, "And there's Guillaumesse."

My departure from Paris was delayed by news which grieved me so profoundly that I was for some time quite unable to undertake any journey. What occurred was that I learned of the death of Robert de Saint-Loup, killed the second day after his return to the front, while covering the retreat of his men. He was as far removed as any man from harbouring hatred for an entire nation—and as for Emperor William, he believed, for special reasons which, perhaps, were false, that he had rather sought to prevent the war than to bring it on. And he had no hatred for Germanism, either; the last words I had heard him utter, six days before, were those which begin one of Schumann's songs; he sang them to me softly on my stairway in German and I even had to stop him because of the neighbours. Trained by his very fine upbringing to eliminate from his behaviour any apology, or invective and all bombast, he had scorned, in the face of the enemy as also at the time of mobilisation, to have recourse to conduct which might have saved his life, and he did this by that self-effacement which was represented in all his actions, including his way of accompanying me to the street bareheaded and closing the door of my carriage for me whenever I had been to see him. For several days I shut myself up in my room, thinking about him. I recalled his arrival

that first time at Balbec, when, dressed in almost pure white flannels, with those eyes of his, the colour of the sea and quite as restless, he strode across the hall adjoining the large dining-room, the wide windows of which looked out on the sea. I remembered what a strange being he had then appeared to me and how greatly I had desired to become his friend. This wish had been realised beyond anything I could have expected, but had given me scarcely any pleasure at the time; later I had come to appreciate all the fine qualities and other things besides which lay hidden beneath that strikingly distinguished appearance. All of that, the good as well as the bad, he had given out lavishly every day and the last day, as he went to the attack of a German trench—had given it out through generosity, through a desire to put everything he possessed at the service of others, just as that evening when he clambered over the benches in the restaurant in order not to disturb me. And the very fact that I had after all seen him so seldom and in such varied settings, under such different circumstances and at such long intervals—in that hall at Balbec, at the café in Rivebelle, at the cavalry barracks and the military dinners at Doncières, at the theatre the night he slapped a journalist's face, in the home of the Princesse de Guermantes—only served to give me more clear-cut and striking pictures of his life and a more sharply defined sorrow over his death than we often have at the loss of someone we have loved more but with whom we have been so constantly associated that the mental picture we retain of him has become merely a sort of hazy composite of an infinite number of pictures imperceptibly different—also, our affection having had full expression, we do not nurse the illusion that we might have known a richer relationship, had not circumstances thwarted us, as we feel in the case of those whom we have seen only for brief moments and at meetings which were cut all too short, through no fault of theirs or ours. Soon after that first day, when I saw Saint-Loup pursuing his monocle and thought him so lordly as he strode across the hall at Balbec, there had come into my life an-

other living figure which I espied for the first time on the beach at Balbec and which also now lived only as a memory —Albertine, treading the sands that first evening, indifferent to everyone, as truly part of the sea as the gulls. So swiftly had I fallen in love with her that, for the sake of going out with her every day, I had never gone to see Saint-Loup from Balbec. And yet the history of my relations with him bore evidence also that at one time I had ceased to love her, for, when I went to take up my abode for a while at Doncières, near Robert, I did so because I was unhappy to see that my feeling for Mme de Guermantes was not requited. His life and Albertine's, which I had come in touch with so late, both at Balbec, and which had both come to such an early end, had crossed at scarcely any points "It was he I sent to Mme. Bontemps when Albertine had left me," I repeated to myself, watching how the nimble shuttles of the years weave threads between memories that seemed most unrelated. Then, too, I reflected, each of their lives had its secret, both of like nature, which I had not suspected In Saint-Loup's case this now caused me perhaps the greater sorrow, since Albertine's life had become so remote from mine. But I could not console myself that either of these two lives should have been so short. Each of them had been wont to say, as they took care of me, "You're the sick one" And now it was they who had died and I could evoke, with such a short interval between them, after all, the earliest and the last recollections I had of them both,— he before the German trench and she after her fall, my first memory of her having a value for me now only because it formed part of the mental picture of the sun setting over the sea. Françoise shewed more compassion over Saint-Loup's death than she had over Albertine's. She at once assumed her rôle of mourner and meditated aloud on the memory of the dead man with lamentations and despairing comments. She made a display of her grief and it was only when I looked up that she put on a stolid expression and turned away, so as to appear not to have seen my face. F

like many neurotics, emotional stress in others was unbearable to her, doubtless because it was too like her own. She now liked to call attention to the slightest crick in her neck or a little dizziness or that she had bruised herself. But if I mentioned any of my own ailments, she immediately became stern and stoical again and pretended not to have heard me. "Poor Marquis!" she would say, although she could not help believing he would have moved heaven and earth to avoid going to war or, once in the army, to get out of the way of danger. "Poor woman!" she would say, thinking of Mme. de Marsantes, "how she must have cried when she heard of her son's death! Now if only she could have seen him—but perhaps it's better she couldn't, for his nose was cut in two and his face was shot away." And her eyes would fill with tears, but through them there gleamed the cruel curiosity of the peasant. Without a doubt Françoise sympathised deeply with Mme. de Marsantes in her sorrow, but she was vexed not to know the form that this sorrow had taken or to be able to treat herself to a view of it. And, as she would have liked to weep and to have me see her weep, she tried to get herself into the mood for it by saying, "It makes me feel very sad." And she watched for signs of grief on my face, too, with an eagerness which made me affect a certain hardness when I spoke of Robert. And doubtless more through a spirit of imitation and because she had heard it said (for there are stereotyped formulas in the pantry as well as in literary circles) she would repeat, but not without putting into it the intonation of a poor person's satisfaction, "All his money did not save him from dying just like anybody else, and now what good is it to him?" The butler took the opportunity to say to her that it was, indeed, sad, but that it was of little importance as compared with the millions of men who were dying every day, notwithstanding all the efforts the government was making to hide the fact. But this time he did not succeed in augmenting her grief, as he had expected, for she replied, "It is true they, too, are dying for France, but they are

unknown; it's always more interesting when it's somebody you know." And, as she enjoyed shedding tears, she added, "You must be sure to let me know if they speak of the Marquis's death in the paper"

Robert had often said to me sadly long before the war, "My life? Oh, let's not talk about it; I'm a doomed man already." [illegible] far succeeded i[illegible] was himself awa[illegible] exaggerated, just as children who have intercourse for the first time or, even before that, seek solitary gratification, imagine that they are like a plant that scatters its pollen, only to die immediately thereafter? And perhaps with Saint-Loup, just as with the children, this exaggeration came not only from the yet unfamiliar idea of sin, but also from the fact that a new and strange sensation has at first an almost terrifying force, which lessens as time goes on. Or was it that he had a presentiment of his untimely end, basing it, if necessary, on the death of his father, who had died quite young? Such a presentiment doubtless seems impossible. And yet death appears to be subject to certain laws. One would often think, for example, that persons born of parents who lived to an old age or died very young were almost forced to die at the same age, the former dragging along their griefs and their incurable ailments to their hundredth year and the latter, despite a happy and healthful life, being carried off at the inevitable premature date by some malady so timely and so fortuitous (whatever deep roots it may have had in their constitution) that it seems like a formality necessary to the accomplishment of their death. And might it not be possible that even accidental death—like that of Saint-Loup, which was, be it remembered, linked up with his character in more ways, perhaps, than I have thought I should mention—has likewise been recorded in advance, known only to the gods, invisible to men, but which a peculiar melancholy, half-conscious, half-unconscious (and, even in its conscious phase, expressed to others

with that complete sincerity with which one announces in advance misfortunes which, in one's inner consciousness, one fully expects to escape, but which are none the less going to happen) reveals to him who bears it within himself and is always conscious of it, like a family motto or a predestined date?

He must have been very handsome in those last hours, he who in this life, whether sitting or striding about in a [illegible] le [illegible] st [illegible] id [illegible] d more like his true self, or, rather, more like his race, in which he was now only a Guermantes, as was symbolically indicated at his funeral in the church of Saint-Hilaire at Combray, all draped with black hangings, on which stood out in red, under the closed coronet, without initials, first name or title, the "G" of the Guermantes which by his death he had once more become. Before going to this burial, which did not take place at once, I wrote to Gilberte. Perhaps I should have written to the [illegible] Guermantes, [illegible] ert's death [illegible] in the case of many others who had seemed to be so closely associated with her life, and that, with her Guermantes spirit, she might even seek to shew that she did not share the superstition of blood relationship. I was too ill to write to everyone. I had formerly believed that she and Robert were fond of one another in the sense in which that expression is used in society, that is to say that, when they were together, they would say affectionate things to one another, which they really felt at the moment. But away from her, Robert did not hesitate to call her an old fool, and, on her side, if it sometimes gave her a selfish pleasure to see him, I had known her to be incapable of going to the least trouble or using her influence to the slightest extent in order to do him

a favour or even to save him from something unfortunate. The ill will she had exhibited toward him in refusing to recommend him to General de Saint-Joseph when he was about to return to Morocco proved that the devotion she manifested for him later, at the time of his marriage, had been only a sort of compensation, which had not cost her dearly. I was, therefore, greatly surprised to learn that, on account of her being ill at the time Robert was killed, they had thought it necessary to keep the papers from her for several days, under the flimsiest pretexts, in order to spare her the shock of the news of his death. But my surprise was still greater when I learned that, after they had finally been obliged to tell her the truth, the Duchess wept for an entire day, was taken ill and did not recover her composure for a long time—more than a week, which was quite a while for her. When I heard of her grief, I was touched by it, and it makes it possible for everyone to say, and I can likewise affirm, that there existed between them a strong friendship. But, when I recall how many mean little remarks and how much unwillingness to render service it still permitted, I realise how little a "strong friendship" amounts to in the fashionable world. But a little later, in a situation of greater historical importance, even though it did not come so close to my heart, Mme. de Guermantes, in my opinion, shewed herself in a still more favourable light. She who, it may be remembered, as a young girl had displayed such impertinent audacity toward the imperial family of Russia and after her marriage had always spoken of them with a freedom of language which sometimes caused her to be accused of lack of tact, was perhaps the only person after the Russian Revolution to shew unlimited devotion to the Grand Dukes and Duchesses. Only the year before the outbreak of the war, she had greatly incensed the Grand Duchess Vladimir by always speaking of the Comtesse de Hohenfelsen, morganatic wife of Grand Duke Paul, as "Grand Duchess Paul." Notwithstanding which, the Russian Revolution had no sooner broken out than our ambas-

sador in Petrograd, M. Paléologue ("Paléo" to the diplomatic world, which, quite as truly as the fashionable world, has its supposedly clever abbreviations) was harassed with telegrams from the Duchesse de Guermantes, asking for news of the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna. And for a considerable time the sole marks of sympathy and respect which that princess received came to her, exclusively and unremittingly, from Mme. de Guermantes.

If not by his death, at least by certain things he had done in the weeks just preceding it, Saint-Loup caused sorrow greater than that of the Duchess. For one thing, the day after that evening when I met M. de Charlus, and the very same day when the Baron had said to Morel, "I will have my revenge," Saint-Loup's efforts to get track of Morel had brought some results—this result, at least, that the general under whose command Morel should have been became aware of the fact that he was a deserter, had him searched for and arrested and then wrote to Saint-Loup as an interested person, to explain, with due regrets, the punishment that was going to be imposed on his friend. Morel had no doubt that his arrest had been instigated by the rancour of M. de Charlus. He remembered the words, "I will have my revenge" and, thinking that this was that revenge, he asked to be allowed to reveal some interesting facts. "It is true I deserted," he admitted, "but if I was influenced to do wrong, was it entirely my fault?" He then disclosed some things about M. de Charlus and M. d'Argencourt (with whom also he was at odds) which did not concern him directly, to tell the truth, but which they, with the doubly unreserved nature of a lover and an invert, had confided to him. These revelations resulted in the arrest of both those gentlemen. The arrest caused them perhaps less distress than the discovery that they each had a rival in the other, and the investigation brought to light many other rivals, but obscure persons, picked up daily in the streets. Moreover, the Baron and M. d'Argencourt were soon released, as was also Morel, because the letter which the

general had written to Saint-Loup came back to him with the inscription "Dead on the field of honour," and the general, out of respect for the deceased, saw to it that Morel was merely sent up to the front. There the latter behaved bravely, came safely through every danger and returned at the close of the war with the *croix de guerre* which M. de Charlus once had tried in vain to obtain for him and which he owed indirectly to the death of Saint-Loup. I have often thought since then, recalling that *croix de guerre* found on the floor at Jupien's, that if Saint-Loup had lived, he could easily have gotten himself elected deputy after the war, thanks to the froth of stupidity and the blaze of glory which it left in its wake, when the loss of a finger, wiping out centuries of social tradition, allowed a man to marry brilliantly into an aristocratic family, and in similar manner the *croix de guerre*, even won in an office, took the place of a declaration of principles to win election to the Chamber of Deputies, almost to the French Academy. The election of Saint-Loup, because of his "holy" family, would have caused M. Arthur Meyer to shed buckets of tears and spill quarts of ink. But perhaps Robert was too sincerely attached to the people to succeed in winning their support, although they would doubtless have forgiven him his democratic ideas in view of his noble lineage. Saint-Loup would, no doubt, have defended his ideas successfully before a Chamber made up of aviators; those heroes would certainly have understood him, as would also a few very rare noble spirits. But, thanks to the sedative influence of the *Bloc National*, the old dregs of political life, who are always reëlected, were trotted out. Those of them who could not enter a Chamber of aviators at least solicited, for admission to the French Academy, the votes of the Marshals, of a President of the Republic, a President of the Chamber and so on. They would not have approved of Saint-Loup, but they did endorse another habitué of Jupien's, that deputy of *l'Action Libérale*, who was reëlected without opposition. He continued to wear his uniform of officer of territorial

troops, although the war had been over for a long time. His election was hailed with joy by all the newspapers that had joined the coalition in support of his candidacy and by the rich noblewomen, who now dressed in old rags, through a feeling for the proprieties and also through fear of taxes, while the men on the Stock Exchange bought diamonds uninterruptedly, not for their wives, but because they had lost confidence in the credit of any country and therefore took refuge in this tangible form of wealth. This made De Beers stock go up a thousand francs. All this stupidity was somewhat exasperating, but one was less vexed with the *Bloc National* when one suddenly saw the victims of bolshevism, Grand Duchesses in rags and tatters, whose husbands and then their sons, had been assassinated, the husbands in wheelbarrows and the sons stoned to death, after first having been left without food, then forced to work amid hoots and jeers and finally thrown into wells and stoned because it was believed they had the plague and might infect others. Those who succeeded in escaping turned up in Paris all of a sudden and added new and terrifying details to this picture of horror.

CHAPTER III

The Princesse de Guermantes Receives

THE new sanitarium to which I retired at that time did not cure me any more than had the first and a long time elapsed before I left it. During the railway [illegible]

dinner very late in the night, and which, the evening before leaving that country estate, while reading some pages from the journal of the Goncourt brothers, I had very largely attributed to the vanity and falseness of literature. This idea, less painful perhaps but still more dispiriting if I explained it, not by a deficiency peculiar to me personally, but as due to the non-existence of the ideal in which I had formerly believed, had not recurred to me for a long time past, but now it struck me anew and with more crushing force than ever before. I recall that it was while the train had halted out in the open country. The declining sun shone halfway down the trunks of the trees that lined the railway track. "Trees," thought I to myself, "you have nothing more to say to me; my deadened heart no longer hears you. Behold me in the midst of nature's beauty and yet it is with indifference and ennui that my eyes take note of the line that separates the sun-bathed foliage from the shadowed trunk. If there was once a time when I was able to believe myself a poet, I now know that I am not. In the new chapter of my now arid life which is opening before me, perhaps men might be able to give me the inspiration I no longer find in nature. But the days when I might possibly have been able to sing her praises will return no more." And yet, even as I offered myself the consolation of this

possible study of human beings taking the place of the departed inspiration of nature, I knew that I was merely offering myself a consolation which I knew had no value. If I really had the soul of an artist, what pleasure would I not derive from the sight of that curtain of trees lighted by the declining sun, and in those little flowers growing along the roadbed and raising their heads almost to the step of the railway carriage, so near that I could count their petals, but I shall take good heed not to describe their colour, for who can hope to convey to another a pleasure he has not himself felt? A little later it was with the same indifference that I noted the gold and orange disks with which the same setting sun riddled the windows of a house; and finally, as the hour advanced, I saw another house which seemed constructed of some material of a strange rosy pink. But I made these various observations with the same complete indifference with which, as I strolled with some lady in a garden, I might have noticed a leaf of glass and, a few steps further on, some object made of a substance similar to alabaster, the unaccustomed colour of which would not have roused me from the most languorous ennui; at most, out of politeness toward the lady and in order to say something and to shew that I had remarked the colour, I might have called attention, as we passed by, to the coloured glass and the bit of stucco. In the same way and only to clear my conscience, I pointed out to myself—as though to someone who was accompanying me and who could get more pleasure from it than I—the reflexions of fire on the windowpanes and the rosy transparence of the house. But the companion whose attention I had drawn to these curious effects must have been of a less enthusiastic disposition than many responsive folk who are enraptured by such sights, for he had taken note of those colours without the slightest joy.

My long absence from Paris had not prevented old friends from keeping me on their lists and continuing faithfully to send me invitations and, when I found at home one for a luncheon to be given by Berma in honour of her daughter

and her son-in-law and another for an afternoon reception the following day at the home of the Prince de Guermantes, the gloomy reflexions I had indulged in on the train were not among the least important reasons which counselled me to attend the latter. "It really was not worth while to deprive myself of social life," I reflected, "since the famous literary work which I have so long hoped each day that I might be able to start the following day, I am no longer—perhaps never was—capable of accomplishing—it may even be that it does not correspond to any reality." To tell the truth, this reason was a wholly negative one and merely served to counteract the force of any reasons which might have kept me from attending this fashionable concert. But the reason which determined me to go there was that name "Guermantes," which had been long enough out of my thoughts so that, when I read it on the invitation, it kindled a spark of attention, brought up from the depths of my memory a cross section of the past associated with that name, together with all the accompanying mental pictures of manorial forests or tall flowers, and it once more assumed the charm and significance it used to have for me in Combray when, passing through the Rue de l'Oiseau before I went home, I used to see, looking like dull black lacquer, the outer side of the stained-glass window of Gilbert the Bad, Lord of Guermantes. For just a moment the Guermantes again seemed to me different from ordinary society folk, incomparably above them or any other living person, even a sovereign, like beings issued from the cross-breeding of the sharp, austere air of that sombre town of Combray, where I had spent my childhood, with the past that one caught a glimpse of in that little street at the height of the stained-glass window. I felt a strong desire to go to the Guermantes', as though that would surely carry me back toward my childhood and the depths of my memory where I saw it mirrored. And I continued to read over the invitation, until the letters which made up that name, so familiar and yet so mysterious, like the very name of Combray itself,

rebelled, declared their independence and seemed to outline before my weary eyes a name that was strange to me.

As Mamma happened luckily to be going to a small tea at Mme. Sazerat's, I felt no compunctions about attending the Princesse de Guermantes' reception. I took a carriage to go there, for the Prince de Guermantes no longer occupied his former mansion, but had built himself a magnificent dwelling on the Avenue du Bois It is one of the mistakes of society folk not to understand that, if they wish us to believe in them, they should first believe in themselves—or, at least, respect the essential elements of our faith. At the time when I believed, even if I knew the contrary, that the Guermantes inhabited a certain palace by virtue of an hereditary right, to gain admittance to the palace of the magician or the fairy, to utter the magic formula which alone could cause the doors to open for me, this seemed to me as arduous an undertaking as to obtain an audience with the magician himself or the fairy. Nothing was easier than to persuade myself that the old manservant (engaged only the night before or supplied by Potel & Chabot) was the son, grandson and descendant of those who had served the family since long before the Revolution; and I had an unlimited willingness to regard as an ancestor's portrait the picture purchased at Bernheim's a month before. But such a spell cannot be carried over into another setting; memories cannot be divided into sections; and there was little left of the Prince de Guermantes, now that he had punctured my illusions by going to live on the Avenue du Bois. The ceilings which I had feared would fall when my name was announced and beneath which there would still have floated for me much of the charm and awe of former times, now looked down on the soirées of an American woman of no interest whatever to me. Of course things have no power in themselves and since it is we who impart it to them, some young middle-class stripling was probably at that very moment experiencing before the palatial mansion of the Avenue du Bois the same feelings that I used to have before the former residence of the

Prince de Guermantes. That was because he was still at the age when one has faith, but I had passed beyond it and had lost that faculty, just as one loses, after the first years, the ability children have to separate the milk they drink into digestible portions, so that adults are forced to take their milk prudently in small quantities, whereas infants can take it at the breast indefinitely, without stopping to catch their breath. But the Prince de Guermantes' change of residence had at least this good result for me, that the carriage which came for me and in which I indulged in these reflexions had to pass through the streets leading to the Champs-Élysées. They were very badly paved at that time, but from the very moment we entered them, I was nevertheless recalled from my deep thought by a sensation of extreme smoothness; the carriage suddenly seemed to run more easily, more softly and noiselessly, as when the gates of an estate open and you glide over roads covered with fine sand or fallen leaves. Nothing of the sort had actually occurred, but I felt all at once the removal of external obstacles, as though I no longer had to make any effort of adjustment or attention, as we do even unconsciously when we come in contact with new objects; the streets through which I was passing were those long-forgotten paths I formerly used to follow when going with Françoise to the Champs-Élysées. The soil knew of itself where it was to go; its resistance was overcome. And, like an aviator who has been laboriously rolling along the ground and then suddenly takes off, I rose slowly toward the silent heights of memories past. In all Paris, those streets will always [illegible] substance from the others

was so fond of, it seemed as though the carriage, guided by my habit of turning that corner so many times, could not possibly do otherwise than turn of its own accord. I was not passing through the same streets as the strollers who were abroad that day, but through a past that glided softly,

sad and sweet. It was, moreover, made up of so many different pasts that I scarce could determine the reason for my melancholy, whether it was due to my walks to meet Gilberte, haunted with the fear that she might not come, or to the proximity of a certain house where I was once told that Albertine had gone with Andrée, or to the philosophical significance that seems to attach to a path one has followed a thousand times with a fruitless and now extinct passion, as on my hurried, feverish trips after luncheon to scan the damp, freshly posted playbills announcing *Phèdre* or *Le Domino Noir*. Reaching the Champs-Élysées and not being very desirous of listening to the entire concert to be given at the Guermantes', I stopped my carriage and was going to get out and walk about a bit, when my attention was caught by the sight of another carriage which was likewise drawing up. In it a man with staring eyes and bent shoulders was sitting, or, rather, was placed and was making a great effort to sit up straight, like a child who has been told to behave properly. Beneath his straw hat there shewed a wild forest of snow-white hair, while from his chin there flowed a white beard, like the beards of snow on the statues of river gods in the public gardens. It was M. de Charlus, with Jupien at his side, full of attentions for him. He was recovering from a stroke of apoplexy that I had not known about (they had merely told me he had lost his sight, whereas it had been only a passing disturbance, for he had entirely recovered the use of his eyes). It may be that he had up till then dyed his hair and now had been ordered to avoid the fatigue involved, but it seemed rather as if his illness, acting like a chemical precipitant, had rendered glisteningly visible all the metal saturating the strands of his hair and beard, which flung it into the air in geysers of pure silver, giving to the dethroned, aged prince the Shakespearean majesty of a King Lear. His eyes had not escaped this total convulsion, this metallurgical transformation of his head. But, by a contrary phenomenon, they had lost all their brilliance, and the most pathetic part of

it was that one felt instinctively that this lost brilliance represented his self-respecting pride, so that the physical and even the mental consciousness of M. de Charlus were outliving the aristocratic dignity with which they had seemed to form an inseparable whole. As an instance—at that very moment Mme. de Sainte-Euverte, whom the Baron formerly had not considered stylish enough for him, drove by in her victoria, doubtless on her way likewise to the Guermantes'. Jupien, who took care of M. de Charlus like a child, whispered in his ear that it was an acquaintance of his, "Mme. de Sainte-Euverte." And straightway, with great effort and with the determination of a sick person who wants to shew that he is now able to make any movements, although they are still difficult, M. de Charlus raised his hat, bowed and saluted Mme. de Sainte-Euverte with as much respect as if she had been the Queen of France. Perhaps, since sick people, like kings, tend to overdo politeness, the very difficulty M. de Charlus experienced in rendering this salute was one of his reasons for doing it, knowing that an act that was painful for a sick person was all the more affecting and doubly meritorious on his part, as well as doubly flattering for the person to whom it was addressed. Perhaps, also, [illegible] that muscular inability [illegible] of the brain [illegible] ve been more effusive than he intended. But I preferred to see in this an almost physical gentleness, a sort of detachment from the realities of life, which is so striking in those over whom death has already cast its shadow. The coming to the surface of the silvery deposits in the Baron's hair and beard [illegible]

[illegible] Euverte a snobbish nature that had seemed to be of the haughtiest, and would even—thereby shewing how instable that superior attitude is—have humbled it before the tawdriest of American women, who would at last have been

able to treat herself to the luxury of the Baron's politeness, until then beyond her reach. For the Baron was still very much alive and his mind alert; his intelligence had not been affected. Indeed, no chorus of Sophocles, chanting the humbled pride of Œdipus, not even death itself nor any funeral oration, could have proclaimed as effectively as did the Baron's meek and obsequious salutation of Mme. de Sainte-Euverte how perishable is the love of earthly grandeur and even human pride itself. M. de Charlus, who heretofore would not have consented to dine with Mme. de Sainte-Euverte, now bowed to the ground before her—perhaps, it is true, through ignorance of the rank of the person he was saluting (for the articles of the social code can be swept away by an apoplectic stroke as well as any other part of the memory) or, it may be, through lack of muscular co-ordination, which gave an appearance of humility, instead of his wonted haughtiness, to what was merely the uncertainty he probably felt as to the identity of the lady who was driving past. He saluted her, in short, with the polite manner of a child coming at its mother's call to greet an older person. And a child, indeed, he had become, but without a child's natural pride. To receive the homage of M. de Charlus was the height of social vanity for Mme. de Sainte-Euverte, as it had previously been for him to refuse it. Now, that unapproachable, over-punctilious nature which M. de Charlus had succeeded in making Mme. de Sainte-Euverte believe was an integral part of himself he completely destroyed at one stroke by the eager timidity, the zealous deference with which he raised his hat and, sitting there respectfully uncovered, let loose the torrents of his silvery locks with the eloquence of a Bossuet. After Jupien had helped the Baron get out of his carriage and I had greeted him, he talked with me very rapidly and in a voice so indistinct that I could not grasp what he said and had to ask him three times to repeat, which provoked a gesture of impatience that astonished me by reason of its contrast with the previous impassive expression on his face, doubtless

a vestige of his paralysis. But when I came to understand his mumbled words, I perceived that the sick man had retained his intelligence absolutely unimpaired. Moreover, there were two distinct persons in him, not counting the others. Of these two, the intellectual one spent his time lamenting the fact that he was losing the power of speech, continually pronouncing one word or one letter in place of another. But whenever this really did happen, the other M de Charlus, the subconscious one, who wished to be envied as much as the other wanted to be pitied, instantly stopped the sentence he had begun, like an orchestra leader whose musicians are floundering, and with infinite ingenuity attached what followed to the word he had used in error but appeared to have chosen intentionally. Even his memory was undimmed; besides, he liked to shew off—not without the fatiguing effort of a most arduous concentration—by reviving some old and unimportant recollection concerning me in order to prove that he had retained, or recovered, his mental acuteness. Without moving his head or his eyes or varying his enunciation by a single inflexion, he said to me, for example, "There's a post with an advertisement on it like the one I was looking at the first time I ever saw you, at Avranches—no, I'm mistaken, it was at Balbec." And as a matter of fact, it was an advertisement of the same product. At the beginning, I scarcely made out what he said, just as one cannot see at all at first in a room where the curtains are drawn; but, like the eyes in semi-darkness, my ears soon became accustomed to this *pianissimo*. I think, too, that it grew gradually louder as the Baron talked ... the feebleness of his ...
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he needs is not to think of his trouble," but actually causing his trouble to come on again in aggravated form. Whichever it was, the Baron was now uttering his words with more vigour (even allowing for my increased ability to understand him) like the tide on a stormy day, throwing up its choppy little waves. And the after-effects of his recent stroke gave an undertone to his words like the sound of pebbles being rolled over and over. Besides, he continually talked to me about the past, in a solemn manner but without sadness, probably in order to demonstrate that he had not lost his memory. He incessantly enumerated all the members of his family or his social circle who had gone, apparently not so much from sorrow that they were no longer alive as from satisfaction at having outlived them. The recollection of their death seemed to give him a clearer realisation of his own return to health. It was with an almost triumphant callousness that he kept repeating in a monotonous tone of voice, stammering slightly and speaking with a thick, sepulchral resonance, "Hannibal de Bréauté, dead! Antoine de Mouchy, dead! Charles Swann, dead! Adalbert de Montmorency, dead! Baron de Talleyrand, dead! Sosthène de Doudeauville, dead!" And each time that word "dead!" seemed to fall like a shovelful of dirt, thrown heavily by a grave-digger anxious to rivet them more securely in their graves.

The Duchesse de Létourville, who was not going to the Princesse de Guermantes' reception because she had just recovered from a long illness, walked past us at this moment and, noticing the Baron, whose illness she had not known about, stopped to say good afternoon to him. The sickness she had just been through had not made her more sympathetic toward the illnesses of others but, on the contrary, more impatient with them, in a nervously ill-humoured manner in which there was, perhaps, much pity. Hearing the Baron pronounce some words incorrectly and with effort and seeing the difficulty he had in moving his arm, she looked first at Jupien, then at me, as if to ask the meaning

of such a shocking phenomenon. When we said nothing, she turned to M. de Charlus with a long look, full of sadness but also of reproach. She seemed to have a grievance against him for being seen in the street with her in such an unusual state, as if he had gone out without a necktie or without his shoes. At a fresh error of pronunciation on the part of the Baron, the Duchess's distress and also her indignation increased and she exclaimed, "Palamède!" in the questioning and exasperated tone of excessively nervous people who cannot bear to be kept waiting a minute and who, if you ask them in at once and apologise for going on with your toilette, reply sarcastically, not as an apology but as if blaming themselves, "Oh, I see I am inconveniencing you!" as though it were a crime on your part to be inconvenienced. Finally, with a more and more distressed air, she left us, saying to the Baron, "You'd better go home."

M. de Charlus said he would like to sit in a chair and rest while Jupien and I walked about a little, and he painfully drew from his pocket what looked to me like a prayer-book. I was not sorry for this opportunity to learn from Jupien many details concerning the Baron's physical and mental condition. "I am glad to have a talk with you, sir," Jupien said, "but we will not go beyond the *Rond-point*. Thank God, the Baron is in pretty good shape now, but I don't dare leave him alone very long; he's the same as ever, he's too kind-hearted, he would give away everything he possesses. And, besides, that isn't all; he's still as much of a 'gay boy' as any youngster and I have to keep my eyes open." "Especially now that he has recovered the use of his," I replied. "It made me very sad to hear that he had lost his sight." "His paralysis did affect him in that way; he was totally blind. Just imagine, during the treatment he took—which, by the way, did him a lot of good—for several months he could not see any more than a person born blind" "Well, at any rate, that must have made one important phase of your supervision quite unnecessary," I remarked. "Not at all. He had scarcely arrived at a

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hotel, when he would ask me what such and such a one of the employees looked like. I would assure him they were all frights but he knew very well that that could not be true everywhere and that I must sometimes be lying. You see what an old rascal he is! Besides, he had a sort of flair, perhaps judging by the voice or something, and then he would scheme around to send me out on urgent errands. One day—you will excuse me for mentioning this, but you once happened into the Temple of Dishonour, so I need conceal nothing from you." (He always did have an unengaging way of taking satisfaction in showing off the secrets in his keeping) "Well, one day I returned quickly from one of those supposedly urgent errands because I had an idea it had been made up for a purpose. Just as I got near the Baron's room, I heard someone say, 'What?' 'Why, this was your first time, then?' the Baron replied. I walked in without knocking and you can imagine my surprise! Misled by the voice—which was, it is true, stronger than is usual at that age and the Baron was then completely blind—the old gentleman, who used to prefer adult men, was with a mere child, not ten years old."

I have been told that M. de Charlus was subject at that time to almost daily fits of depression, characterised, not by incoherent rambling, but by confessing aloud—before others whose presence or whose sternly moral code he had forgotten—opinions he was usually accustomed to conceal, his pro-German sympathies, for example. Thus, a long time after the end of the war, he would lament the defeat of the Germans, of whom he considered himself one, saying proudly, "But still, it's impossible that we should not get our revenge, for we have proven that it was we who were capable of the greatest resistance and had the best organisation." Or his confidences would take on another tone and he would exclaim, white with anger, "Lord X , or the Prince de X.. would do well not to come here again and say what they said yesterday, for I had to hold on to myself not to reply to them, 'You know you're one of that kind

yourself, just as much as I'." It is needless to add that, when M. de Charlus, "not all there," as they say, made public confession in this way of pro-German or other tendencies, the persons who happened to be about him at the time, whether Jupien or the Duchesse de Guermantes, were in the habit of interrupting his imprudent remarks and giving them a strained but creditable interpretation for the benefit of any others present who were less intimate acquaintances and less discreet. "My God!" exclaimed Jupien, "I was right not to want us to go very far away. Look at him! He has already succeeded in striking up a conversation with a young gardener's helper. I must bid you good-bye. I dare not leave my patient alone one minute; he is nothing but an overgrown child."

* * *

Once more I left my carriage shortly before reaching the house of the Princesse de Guermantes and fell to thinking again of the lassitude and ennui with which I had endeavoured the day before, in what is considered one of the most beautiful parts of France, to describe the line that separated sunlight from shadow on the tree trunks. To be sure, the intellectual conclusions I had drawn did not to-day disturb my inner consciousness so cruelly. They remained the same; but, as occurred each time I happened to be torn away from my regular habits and to go out at a different hour or to a new place, I was conscious of a keen pleasure. To-day this pleasure seemed to me a purely frivolous one, namely, that of attending an afternoon reception given by the Princesse de Guermantes. But since I now knew that I could not hope for other than frivolous pleasures, why deprive myself of them? I reminded myself that, when attempting that description, I had not experienced the enthusiasm which is one of the first signs of talent, though not the only one. I now tried to bring out from the storehouse of my memory other "snapshots," particularly those I had "taken" in Venice, but just the word "snapshot"

alone made it all as wearisome to me as an exhibition o photographs, and I felt within myself no more inclinatio or talent for describing now what I had seen years befor than I felt yesterday for describing what I was at that ver moment gazing upon with a painstaking and listless eye In a few minutes many friends whom I had not seen for a very long time were doubtless going to ask me not to isolat myself, as I had been doing, but to devote my days to them And I would have no reason for refusing, since I now had the proof that I was not good at anything, that I could no longer hope to find joy in literature, whether through my own fault, for lack of talent, or because literature itself was less pregnant with reality than I had thought.

When I reflected on what Bergotte had said to me, "You are ill, but you are not to be pitied, because you have intellectual satisfactions," I saw how greatly he had been mistaken about me. How little satisfaction I found in my clear but sterile thinking! I will even add that, if I occasionally had some pleasures—not of an intellectual sort—I wasted them with one woman and another, so that, even had Fate granted me a hundred more years to live, free from physical infirmities, this would merely have added successive extensions to an existence that had no depth, only length, and which there was no interest in prolonging at all, much less for any considerable length of time.

As for "intellectual satisfactions," could I apply this designation to the unemotional observations that my clear vision and close reasoning made joylessly and fruitlessly? But sometimes it is just at the moment when all appears lost that a signal comes which may save us; after knocking at all the doors that lead nowhere, the only one through which we can enter, one which we might have sought in vain for a hundred years, we stumble against unwittingly, and it opens.*

* In the French text, Volume I ends at this point.—*F.A B.*

Engrossed in the unhappy meditations I described a moment ago, I had entered the court of the Guermantes residence and, in my absorption, failed to notice an automobile that was coming in; at the chauffeur's cry I had barely time to get out of the way and, in stepping back, struck my foot against some unevenly cut flagstones leading to a carriage house. In recovering my balance, I put my foot on a stone that was a little lower than the one next to it; immediately all my discouragement vanished before a feeling of happiness which I had experienced at different moments of my life, at the sight of trees I thought I recognised when driving around Balbec, or the church spires of Martinville, or the savour of a *madeleine* dipped in herb tea, or from many other sensations I have mentioned, which had seemed to me to be synthesised in the last works of Vinteuil. Just as when I tasted the *madeleine*, all anxiety as to the future, all intellectual doubt was [illegible]
been harassing me a mo[illegible]
of my literary gifts, and [illegible]
denly banished as if by magic. But this time I made a firm resolve that I would not be satisfied to leave the question unanswered (as I did the day I tasted of a *madeleine* dipped in herb tea) as to why, without my having worked out any new line of reasoning or found any decisive argument, the difficulties that had seemed insoluble a short time before had now lost all their importance. The feeling of happiness which had just come over me was, indeed, exactly the same as I had experienced while eating the *madeleine*, but at that time I put off seeking the deep-lying causes for it. There was a purely material difference in the mental images evoked. A deep azure blue intoxicated my sight, impressions of coolness and dazzling light hovered near me and, in my eagerness to seize them, not daring to move—just as when I tasted the flavour of the *madeleine* and tried to bring back to my mind what it suggested to me—I stood there, swaying back and forth, as I had done a moment before, one foot on the higher stone and the other on the lower, indifferent to

the possible amusement of the large crowd of chauffeurs. Each time that I merely repeated the action physically, the effort was in vain; but if I forgot the Guermantes reception and succeeded in recapturing the sensation I had felt the instant I placed my feet in that position, again the dazzling, elusive vision brushed me with its wings, as if to say, "Seize me in my flight, if you have the power, and try to solve the riddle of happiness I propound to you." And almost immediately I recognised it; it was Venice, about which my efforts at description and the supposed "snapshots" taken by my memory had never yielded me anything, but which was brought back to me by the sensation I had once felt as I stood on two uneven flagstones in the baptistry of Saint Mark's, and with that sensation came all the others connected with it that day, which had been waiting in their proper place in the series of forgotten days, until a sudden happening had imperiously commanded them to come forth. It was in the same way that the taste of the little *madeleine* had recalled Combray to my mind. But why had the mental images of Combray and Venice at their respective moments given me a joy like a sense of certainty, sufficient, without other proofs, to make me indifferent to death? While I was still putting this question to myself, determined this time to find the answer to it, I entered the Guermantes mansion —for we always put ahead of the subjective task we have to perform the outward rôle we are playing, and mine that day was that of an invited guest. But, when I reached the second story, a butler asked me to step for a moment into a small library adjoining the buffet, until the selection they were playing was finished, the Princess having forbidden that the doors be opened while it was being played. At that very moment a second signal came to reinforce the one I had received from the two uneven flagstones, and urged me to persevere in my task. What happened was that a servant, trying in vain to make no noise, struck a spoon against a plate. The same kind of felicity as I had received from the uneven paving stones now came over me; the sensations

were again those of great heat, but entirely different, mingled with the odour of smoke, tempered by the cool fragrance of a forest setting, and I recognized that what seemed to me so delightful was the very row of trees which I had found it wearisome to study and describe and which, in a sort of hallucination, I thought now stood before me as I uncorked the bottle of beer I had with me in the railway carriage, the sound of the spoon striking the plate having given me—until I came to myself again—the illusion of the very similar noise of the hammer of a workman who had made some repairs to a wheel while our train stopped before that little clump of trees. Then one would have said that the signs which were to lift me out of my discouragement that day and restore my faith in literature had determined to come thick and fast, for when a butler who had been for a long time in the service of the Prince de Guermantes recognised me and, in order to save my going to the buffet, brought to me in the library a small plate of *petits fours* and a glass of orangeade, I wiped my mouth with the napkin he had given me; but immediately, like the character in *The Arabian Nights* who unwittingly performs precisely the rite that calls up before him, visible to his eyes alone, a docile genie, ready to transport him far away, a fresh vision of azure blue passed before my eyes; but this time it was pure and saline and it rounded upward like bluish breasts. The impression was so vivid that the moment I was re-living fused with the real present and, more dazed than on that day when I wondered whether I was really going to be received by the Princesse de Guermantes or was everything going to crash about my head, I thought the servant had just opened the window toward the beach and everything called me to go down and stroll along the embankment at high tide; the napkin which I had taken to wipe my mouth had precisely the same sort of starchy stiffness as the towel with which I had had so much trouble drying myself before the window the first day of my stay at Balbec, and now, in this library of the Guermantes mansion, it spread out

in its various folds and creases, like a peacock's tail, the plumage of a green and blue ocean. And I drew enjoyment, not only from those colours, but from a whole moment of my life which had brought them into being and had no doubt been an aspiration toward them, but which perhaps some feeling of fatigue or sadness had prevented me from enjoying at Balbec and which now, pure and disembodied, freed from all the imperfections of objective perception, filled me with joy. The piece they were playing was likely to finish at any moment and I be obliged to enter the salon. Therefore I made an effort to try as quickly as possible to see clearly into the nature of the identical pleasures I had just felt three separate times within a few minutes, and then to draw from them the lesson they had to give. The great difference there is between the actual impression we received from something and the artificial impression we create for ourselves when we endeavour by an effort of the will to bring the object before us again, I did not pause to consider; remembering only too well the comparative indifference with which Swann used to be able to speak of the period in his life when he was loved (because this expression suggested something so different to him) and the sudden pain caused him by Vinteuil's little phrase, which brought to mind those days themselves just as he had felt them, I understood too clearly that the sensation of the uneven flagstones, the stiffness of the napkin and the savour of the *madeleine* had awakened in me something that had no relation to what I used to endeavour to recall to mind about Venice, Balbec, Combray with the aid of a colourless, undistinguishing memory. And I understood how one can come to judge life to be mediocre, when at certain times it seems so beautiful, because this judgment and this disparaging conclusion are based on something entirely different from life itself, on mental images which have retained no trace of life. At the most, I noted incidentally that the difference between each of these real impressions and the corresponding artificial one—differences which explain why an even-toned painting

of life cannot be a true likeness—was probably due to this cause, namely, that the slightest word we have spoken or the most insignificant gesture we have made at a certain moment in our life was surrounded and illumined by things that logically had no relation to it and were separated from it by our intelligence, which had no need of them for reasoning purposes; and yet, in the midst of these irrelevant objects—here, the rosy glow of eventide on the flower-covered wall of a rustic restaurant, the feeling of hunger, the yearning for women, the pleasant sensation of luxury; there, blue volutes of the morning sea, wrapped in spirals around strains of music which only partly emerge, like mermaids' shoulders—the most insignificant gesture, the simplest act remain enclosed, as it were, in a thousand sealed jars, each filled with things of an absolutely different colour, odour and temperature. Furthermore, these jars, ranged along the topmost levels of our bygone years—years during which we have been constantly changing, if only in our dreams and thoughts—stand at very different altitudes and give us the impression of strangely varied atmospheres. It is true that we have gone through these changes imperceptibly, but between our present state and the memory that suddenly comes back to us, just as between two recollections of different years, places or hours, there is such a wide difference that that fact alone, regardless even of any specific individuality, would suffice to make comparison between them impossible. Yes, if, thanks to our ability to forget, a past recollection has been able to avoid any tie, any link with the present moment, if it has remained in its own place and time, if it has kept its distance, its isolation in the depths of a valley or on the tip of a mountain peak, it suddenly brings us a breath of fresh air—refreshing just because we have breathed it once before—of that purer air which the poets have vainly tried to establish in Paradise, whereas it could not convey that profound sensation of renewal if it had not already been breathed, for the only true paradise is always the paradise we have lost. And, in passing, I noted that the

work of art which I already felt myself prepared to undertake, but without my having made any conscious resolution to that effect, would present great difficulties. For I would be obliged to execute the different parts of it in somewhat different mediums. The medium suitable for recalling mornings by the sea would be very different from that required to describe afternoons in Venice, a medium distinct and new, of a very special transparence and sonority, compact, refreshing and rosy-hued. And then, different again would be the medium, if I essayed to depict the evenings at Rivebelle in the dining-room opening on the garden, when the heat seemed to disintegrate, to condense and settle to the ground, while the falling twilight still tinted the roses on the wall of the restaurant and the sky still glowed with the pastel tints of dying day. But I passed quickly over all that, under the more imperious urge which I felt to seek the reason for this feeling of happiness and the air of certainty with which it came over me, a search I had hitherto postponed. I caught an inkling of this reason when I compared these various happy impressions with one another and found that they had this in common, namely, that I felt them as if they were occurring simultaneously in the present moment and in some distant past, which the sound of the spoon against the plate, or the unevenness of the flagstones, or the peculiar savour of the *madeleine* even went so far as to make coincide with the present, leaving me uncertain in which period I was. In truth, the person within me who was at that moment enjoying this impression enjoyed in it the qualities it possessed which were common to both an earlier day and the present moment, qualities which were independent of all considerations of time; and this person came into play only when, by this process of identifying the past with the present, he could find himself in the only environment in which he could live and enjoy the essence of things, that is to say, entirely outside of time. That explained why my apprehensiveness of death vanished the moment I instinctively recognised the savour of the little *madeleine*, because

at that moment the person within me was a timeless person, consequently unconcerned with the vicissitudes of the future. That person had never come to me, never manifested himself, except independently of all immediate activity, all immediate enjoyment, whenever the miracle of a resemblance with things past enabled me to escape out of the present. He alone had the power to make me recapture bygone days, times past, which had always balked the efforts of my memory and my intelligence.

And perhaps a moment ago, when I considered that Bergotte had been mistaken in speaking of the satisfactions of the intellectual life, this was because at that time I applied the term "intellectual life" to logical processes of reasoning which had no connection with it or with what was then taking place within me—just as the reason I found society and even life tiresome was because I appraised them on the basis of false impressions of the past, whereas in reality I had now such an eager desire to live that an actual moment from the past had just been revived within me on three distinct occasions.

Merely a moment from the past? Much more than that, perhaps; something which, common to both past and present, is far more essential than either.

How many times in the course of my life had I been disappointed by reality because, at the time I was observing it, my imagination, the only organ with which I could enjoy beauty, was not able to function, by virtue of the inexorable law which decrees that only that which is absent can be imagined. And now suddenly the operation of this harsh law was neutralised, suspended, by a miraculous expedient of nature by which a sensation—the sound of the spoon * and that of the hammer, a similar unevenness in two paving stones—was reflected both in the past (which made it possible for my imagination to take pleasure in it) and in the present, the physical stimulus of the sound or the contact with the stones adding to the dreams of the imagination that

* "Fork" in the French text here.—*F.A.B.*

which they usually lack, the idea of existence—and this subterfuge made it possible for the being within me to seize, isolate, immobilise for the duration of a lightning flash what it never apprehends, namely, a fragment of time in its pure state. The being that was called to life again in me when, with such a thrill of joy, I heard the sound that characterises both a spoon touching a plate and a hammer striking a car wheel, or when I felt under foot the unevenness of the pavement in the court of the Guermantes residence, similar to that in the baptistry of Saint Mark's, draws its sustenance only from the essence of things, in that alone does it find its nourishment and its delight. It languishes in the contemplation of the present, where the senses cannot furnish this essential substance, or in the study of the past, rendered barren for it by the intelligence, or while awaiting a future which the will constructs out of fragments of the past and the present from which it has withdrawn still more of their reality, retaining only that part of them which is suited to the utilitarian, narrowly human purpose for which it designs them. But let a sound already heard or an odour caught in bygone years be sensed anew, simultaneously in the present and the past, real without being of the present moment, ideal but not abstract, and immediately the permanent essence of things, usually concealed, is set free and our true self, which had long seemed dead but was not dead in other ways, awakes, takes on fresh life as it receives the celestial nourishment brought to it. A single minute released from the chronological order of time has re-created in us the human being similarly released, in order that he may sense that minute. And one comprehends readily how such a one can be confident in his joy; even though the mere taste of a *madeleine* does not seem to contain logical justification for this joy, it is easy to understand that the word "death" should have no meaning for him; situated outside the scope of time, what could he fear from the future?

But this illusion, which brought close to me a moment from the past, incompatible with the present, never lasted

any length of time. One can, it is true, prolong the visions evoked by voluntary recollection, which do not engage more of our faculties than flipping the pages of a picture book.

now the beach at Balbec, very much as I might have illustrated the kind of day it was by turning the pages of a book of watercolour sketches made in the different places I had visited, saying to myself, with the selfish pleasure of a collector, as I thus catalogued the illustrations in my memory, "Just the same, I have seen some beautiful things in my life!" At that time, no doubt my memory asserted the differences between the sensations, but all it did was to combine homogeneous elements. Such had not been the case, however, with the three memories of the past which had just come over me, from which, instead of conceiving a more flattering idea of my inner self, I had on the contrary almost come to doubt the present reality of this self. Just as on the day when I had dipped the *madeleine* in the hot tea, at the very heart of the place where I happened to be (whether, as then, it was my room in Paris or, as to-day, at this very moment, the library of the Prince de Guermantes or, a moment ... there had been within

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place where I happened to be and also to some other place—the bedroom of my Aunt Léonie, a railway carriage, the baptistry of Saint Mark's. And at the moment I was reasoning thus, the shrill noise of a hot-water pipe, exactly like the long blasts we sometimes heard of a summer evening ... made me feel (as I had al-

taurant in Paris at the

half empty, hot and

summery) much more than merely a sensation similar to

the one I felt at Balbec toward the end of one afternoon when, the tables already covered with their linen and silverware, the vast windows wide open on the embankment without a single interruption, a single intervening plenum of glass or stone, and the sun slowly setting over the ocean, where boats were beginning to move about, I could join Albertine and her friends, strolling on the embankment, by merely stepping over the wooden window frame, scarcely higher than my ankle, in the groove of which they had slid back the sectional windows in order to ventilate the hotel. Moreover, it was not merely an echo or a duplication of a past sensation which the sound of the hot-water pipe had just made me experience, but that very sensation itself. In that case, as in all the preceding ones, the sensation common to both occasions had sought to re-create about itself the former setting, while the present setting, which was occupying its space, opposed with all the resistance of its mass this invasion of a Paris residence by a Normandy beach or a railway embankment. The dining-room by the sea at Balbec, with its damask linen laid like altar cloths to receive the setting of the sun, had sought to shatter the solidity of the Guermantes mansion and force open its doors, and it had for an instant made the sofas rock about me, as it had, on another day, the tables in a Paris restaurant. Always, in these resurrections of the past, the distant place, evoked about the common sensation, had grappled for a moment, like a wrestler, with the present scene. The latter had always been the victor but it was ever the vanquished that seemed to me the more beautiful, so that I was in a state of ecstasy as I stood on the uneven pavement—as I had been when I sat before the cup of tea—seeking to perpetuate as soon as they appeared, or to bring back to mind after they had escaped me, that Combray, that Balbec, that Venice which rose out of the past and invaded the very heart of these places in the present (which, however, the past can permeate) only to be forced to retreat and abandon me. And if the present scene had not been immediately victorious,

I believe I should have fainted; for, during the instant that they last, these resurrections of the past are so complete that they do not merely oblige our eyes to become oblivious to the room before them and contemplate instead the rising tide or the railway track edged with trees; they also force our nostrils to inhale the air of places which are, however, far remote, constrain our will to choose between the various plans they lay before us, compel our entire being to believe itself surrounded by them, or at least to vacillate between them and the present scenes, bewildered by an uncertainty similar to that which one sometimes experiences before an ineffable vision at the moment of losing consciousness in sleep.

Thus it was that what the being three and even four times revived within me had just enjoyed was perhaps, it is true, fragments of existence removed outside the realm of time, but this contemplation, although part of eternity, was transitory. And yet I felt that the pleasure it had bestowed on me at rare intervals in my life was the only one that was fecund and real. Is not the indication of the unreality of the others sufficiently evident either in their inability to satisfy us—as, for example, social pleasures, which at best produce the discomfort caused by partaking of wretched food; or friendship, which is a delusion, because, for whatever moral reasons he may do it, the artist who gives up an hour of work for an hour's conversation with a friend knows that he is sacrificing a reality for something which is non-existent (friends appearing to be such only thanks to that gentle madness from which we suffer throughout our lives and to which we give way, though, in the depth of our intelligence, we know it to be the error of a mind unbalanced enough even to believe the chairs and tables alive and to carry on a conversation with them)—or in the despondency that follows whatever satisfaction they may give, like the sadness I felt the day I was introduced to Albertine because I had gone to that trouble (very slight, it is true) to accomplish something—making a young girl's acquaintance—which seemed unimportant now only because I had accomplished

it? Even a profounder pleasure, such as I might have experienced when I was in love with Albertine, was realised only inversely by the distress I felt when she was not there, for, whenever I was certain she was coming, like the day she returned from the Trocadéro, it seemed to me I experienced only a vague ennui, whereas I became more and more exalted as I analysed more and more deeply the sound of the spoon * against the plate or the taste of the herb tea, with an ever increasing joy which had transported into my room the bedroom of my Aunt Léonie and, in its wake, all Combray and the two walks, Guermantes way and Méséglise way.

And so I was decided to consecrate myself to this study of the essence of things, to establish its true nature, but how should I do this, by what means? It is true that, when the stiffness of the napkin called up Balbec before me and for a moment caressed my imagination not only with a mental picture of the sea as it was that morning long ago, but also with the odour of the room, the force of the wind, the desire for luncheon, the hesitation which walk to choose—all of that attached to the sensation of the open sea, like the wings of a water wheel in its dizzy course, and again, when the unevenness of the two paving stones extended in every direction and all dimensions the bare and barren impressions I had of Venice and Saint Mark's and likewise all the sensations I had experienced there, connecting the *piazza* with the church, the *imbarcadero* with the *piazza*, the canal with the *imbarcadero* and, with all that the eyes see, that world of desires which is perceived only with the mind—it is true that at those moments I was tempted—if not, on account of the season, to go and idly glide over the waters of Venice, which I associated more especially with the springtime—at any rate to return to Balbec. But I did not tarry an instant with this idea; not only did I know that distant places were not what was suggested to me by the names they bore when I imagined them to myself. (It was now almost exclusively in my dreams, while sleeping, that a place would spread

* "Knife" in the French text here.—*F. A B.*

itself out before me composed of pure matter, entirely distinct from the common things one sees and touches.) But even with regard to those mental images of another sort, those of memory, I knew that I had not found the beauty of Balbec when I went there, and even the beauty it had left me, that of memory, was no longer the same as that which I found on my second visit there. I had too often experienced the impossibility of discovering in physical form what was in the depths of my being It was not in the Piazza San Marco, any more than it had been on my second visit to Balbec or on my return to Tansonville to see Gilberte, that I would recapture past Time, and the journey which was merely suggested to me once more by the illusion that these old impressions existed outside myself, at the corner of a certain square, could not be the means I was seeking. I did not want to follow another false trail, for the important thing for me was at last to determine whether it was really possible to attain what, because of my constant disappointment in places and persons, I had believed to be unrealisable (although at one time the concert piece by Vinteuil had seemed to tell me the opposite). Therefore I was not going to attempt another experiment along the path which I had long known led nowhere. Impressions such as those which I was endeavouring to analyse and define could not fail to vanish away at the contact of a material enjoyment that was unable to bring them into existence. The only way to get more joy out of them was to try to know them more completely at the spot where they were to be found, namely, within myself, and to clarify them to their lowest depths. I had not been able to grasp the happiness at Balbec, any more than I had that of living with Albertine, as it had not b[illegible] had come and gone. [illegible] essence must lie somewhere else than in action, and compared different disappointments, but not in a haphazard manner or merely following the vicissitudes of my existence.

I came to realise clearly that disappointment in a journey and disappointment in a love affair were not different in themselves but merely the different aspects assumed in varying situations by our inability to find our real selves in physical enjoyment or material activity. And thinking over again that timeless joy caused by the sound of the spoon or the taste of the *madeleine*, I said to myself, "Was that the happiness suggested by the little phrase of the sonata to Swann, who made the mistake of confusing it with the pleasure of love and was unable to find it in artistic creation—that happiness which I came to sense dimly was even farther removed from everything earthly than the little phrase of the sonata had suggested, when I caught the red, mysterious call of that septet which Swann had never known, having died, like so many others, before the truth intended for them had been revealed?" But it would have availed him nothing in any case, for that phrase may, indeed, have been able to symbolise a call, but it could not have created talents and made of Swann the writer he never was. However, after having meditated a short while over these resurrections of past memories, I became aware that in another way obscure impressions had sometimes, even as far back as Combray along the Guermantes way, engaged my thoughts after the manner of those subjective recollections, but these others concealed within themselves, not a sensation of bygone days, but a new truth, a priceless image, which I sought to discover by efforts like those one makes to recall something forgotten, as if our most beautiful ideas were like musical airs that would come back to us without our ever having heard them and which we would make an effort to seize and transcribe. I remembered with pleasure, because it shewed me that I was already the same then as now and it was an indication of a fundamental trait of my nature (but also with sadness when I reflected that I had made no progress since then) that even when I was at Combray, I used to hold attentively before my mind some object that had forced itself upon my attention—a cloud, a triangle, a steeple, a flower, a pebble—

because I felt there might be underneath these signs something quite different which I ought to try to discover, a thought which they transcribed after the manner of those hieroglyphics which one might think represented only material objects. Most assuredly this deciphering was difficult but it alone offered some truth to be read. For the truths that the intelligence grasps directly and openly in the full-lighted world are somehow less profound, less indispensable than those which life has communicated to us without our knowledge through the form of impressions, material because they have come to us through our senses, but the inner meaning of which we can discern In short, in this case as in the other, whether objective impressions such as I had received from the sight of the spires of Martinville, or subjective memories like the unevenness of the two steps or the taste of the *madeleine,* I must try to interpret the sensations as the indications of corresponding laws and ideas; I must try to think, that is to say, bring out of the obscurity what I had felt, and convert it into a spiritual equivalent. Now this method, which seemed to me the only one, what was it other than to create a work of art? And already the consequences came crowding into my mind; for, whether it was subjective memories of the type of the sound made by the spoon * or the taste of the *madeleine*, or those truths recorded with the aid of external objects, the significance of which I sought to find within my head, where, jumbled together, steeples, wild flowers, they made up a complicated, flower-bedecked medley, their first characteristic was that I was not free to choose them but they came to my mind pell-mell. And I felt that that must surely be the hall mark of their genuineness. I had not set out to seek the two paving stones in the court which I struck my foot against. But it was precisely the fortuitous, unavoidable way in which I had come upon [illegible] truth of a past which that

* "Fork" in the French text here —*F. A B.*

of recapturing reality. That sensation is the guarantee of the truth of the entire picture composed of contemporary impressions which the sensation brings in its train, with that unerring proportion of light and shadow, emphasis and omission, remembrance and oblivion, which conscious memory and observation will never know.

To read the subjective book of these strange signs (signs standing out boldly, it seemed, which my conscious mind, as it explored my unconscious self, went searching for, stumbled against and passed around, like a diver groping his way), no one could help me with any rule, for the reading of that book is a creative act in which no one can stand in our stead, or even collaborate with us. And therefore how many there are who shrink from writing it; how many tasks are undertaken in order to avoid that one! Each happening, the Dreyfus case, the war, supplied fresh excuses to the writers for not deciphering that book—they wished to assure the triumph of right, rebuild the moral unity of the nation, and they had no time to think of literature. But these were only excuses; they [illegible]
lost what they [illegible]
to be done an [illegible]
it But in art excuses count for nothing; good intentions are of no avail; the artist must at every instant heed his instinct; so that art is the most real of all things, the sternest school in life and truly the Last Judgment. This book, the most difficult of all to decipher, is also the only one dictated to us by reality, the only one the "imprinting" of which on our consciousness was done by reality itself. No matter what idea life may have implanted within us, its material representation, the outline of the impression it has made upon us, is always the guarantee of its indispensable truth The ideas formed by pure intellect have only a logical truth, a potential truth; the selection of them is an arbitrary act. The book written in symbolic characters not traced by us is our only book. Not that the ideas we form ourselves may not be logically correct, but we do not know whether they

are true. Only the subjective impression, however inferior the material may seem to be and however improbable the outline, is a criterion of truth and for that reason it alone merits being apprehended by the mind, for it alone is able, if the mind can extract this truth, to lead the mind to a greater perfection and impart to it a pure joy. The subjective impression is for the writer what experimentation is for the scientist, but with this difference, that with the scientist the work of the intelligence precedes, and with the writer it comes afterwards Anything we have not had to decipher and clarify by our own personal effort, anything that was clear before we intervened, is not our own. Nothing comes from ourselves but that which we draw out of the obscurity within us and which is unknown to others. And since art is a faithful re-composing of life, around these truths that one has attained within oneself there floats an atmosphere of poetry, the sweetness of a mystery, which is merely the semi-darkness through which we have come. An oblique ray of the setting sun instantly recalls to me a period in my early childhood that I had never thought of since—when my Aunt Léonie had an illness which Dr. Percepied feared might be typhoid fever, so they moved me for a week into the little room Eulalie had on the Place de l'Église, which had only a grass rug on the floor and a muslin curtain at the window and always hummed with a sunshine I was not accustomed to. And as I saw how the remembrance of that little room of a former servant suddenly added to my past life a long stretch of time so different from the rest and so delightful, I thought by contrast of the utter nullity of the impressions that the most sumptuous affairs in the most princely mansions had contributed to my life. The only slightly unpleasant thing about that room of Eulalie's was that, owing to the nearness of the railway bridge, you could hear the shrieking whistles of the trains at night. But since I knew that these cries came from machines under control, I was not frightened, as I might have been in a prehistoric age by the

howlings of some nearby mammoth in his free and unregulated wanderings.

Thus I had already come to the conclusion that we are not at all free in the presence of the work of art to be created, that we do not do it as we ourselves please, but that it existed prior to us and we should seek to discover it as we would a natural law because it is both necessary and hidden. But when art enabled us to make this discovery, was it not disclosing to us, after all, what we ought to hold most precious but what usually remains forever unknown to us, our true life, reality as we have felt it, so different from what we think that we are filled with great happiness when chance brings back to us the true remembrance of it? I convinced myself of this by the falseness of even the art that calls itself "realist," which would not be so untruthful if we had not formed in life the habit of giving to our sensations an outward expression so different from them, which after a short while we take for reality itself. I realised that I would not have to trouble myself about the various literary theories that had disturbed me for a time, more especially those the critics developed at the time of the Dreyfus case and revived during the war, which sought to "make the artist come out of his ivory tower," scorn frivolous or sentimental subjects, depict great working-class movements and, if not huge crowds, at any rate no more insignificant idlers ("I confess that the portrayal of these useless persons is of no particular interest to me," Bloch said) but high-minded intellectuals or heroes. Moreover, leaving one side for the present the consideration of their logical content, these theories seemed to me a proof of inferiority on the part of those who advanced them, just as a really well bred child, hearing some people with whom he has been sent to have luncheon say, "We speak right out, we are frank," feels that this remark indicates a moral quality inferior to the good deed, pure and simple, which says nothing. True art has no use for so many proclamations and is produced in silence. Moreover, those who theorised thus used ready-made expressions which

bore a marked resemblance to the very ones they branded as imbecile. And perhaps it is more by the quality of the language used than by the æsthetic principles observed that one [illegible] ıoral effort [illegible] f language [illegible] (and even when it comes to studying the laws of character, one can do this quite as well on a frivolous as a serious subject, just as a prosector can study the laws of anatomy precisely as well on the body of an imbecile as on that of a man of talent, for the great moral laws, like those governing the circulation of the blood or renal elimination, vary but little with the intellectual worth of the individual) is readily believed by those who admire these theoreticians not to be a proof of intellectual value, which they cannot infer from the beauty of an image and can discern only if they see it expressed in direct form. From this comes the vulgar temptation for the writer to produce intellectual works. A grave lack of fine feeling! A book in which there are theories is like an article from which the price mark has not been removed. And even at that, a price mark merely expresses value, whereas in literature logical reasoning lessens it We reason, that is to say, we wander about aimlessly, whenever we lack the power to compel ourselves to pass a subjective impression through all the successive stages that shall finally lead to its comprehension and definition and to the expression of its reality. The reality to be expressed, I now understood, was to be found, not in the outward appearance of the subject, but in the extent to which this impression had penetrated to a depth where that appearance was of little importance, as was symbolised by that sound of a spoon against a plate, that starchy stiffness of the napkin, both of more priceless value for my spiritual renewal than any number of conversations on humanitarianism, patriotism or internationalism. "No more style!" I had heard them say in those earlier days. "No more literature! Give us life!" One may imagine how extensively even the simple theories of M. de Norpois

"against the flute-players" had blossomed forth again since the beginning of the war. For everyone who, having no artistic sense—that is to say, no submission to subjective reality—may have the knack of reasoning about art till doomsday, especially if he be, in addition, a diplomat or financier in contact with the "realities" of the present day, is only too ready to believe that literature is an intellectual game which is destined to be gradually abandoned as time goes on. Some wished the novel to be a sort of cinematographic parade. *This conception was absurd. In reality,* nothing is farther removed than this cinematographic view from what we have perceived.

It so happened that as I entered this library, I remembered what the Goncourts say about the beautiful first editions which it contains, and I determined to look them over during the time I was obliged to wait there. And while still continuing my reasoning, I was taking out the precious volumes one by one—without paying much attention to them, I admit—when, just as I opened one of them absent-mindedly, George Sand's *François le Champi,* I felt myself unpleasantly struck by some impression very much out of harmony with what I had been meditating upon, until finally, with an emotion so strong that it moved me to tears, I came to see how fully that impression was in agreement with my thoughts. It was as though, at the very moment when the undertaker's assistants are about to lower the casket into the *burial vault, the son of a man who had rendered great* service to his country, as he is clasping the hands of the last friends who file past, hears a sudden blare of trumpets under [illegible] mock- [illegible] it is a [illegible] iour to his father's remains, he can no longer hold back his tears, although till then he has mastered his emotions. In like manner, I had just recognised the painful impression I had experienced as I read the title of a book in the library of the Prince de Guermantes, a title which had formerly given me

the idea that literature offered us that world of mystery which I now no longer found in it. And yet it was not a very unusual book, *François le Champi*, but that name, like the name "Guermantes," meant something different to me from the names I had come to know since then. The remembrance of what had seemed inexplicable to me in the subject of *François le Champi* while Mamma was reading it to me had been aroused by this title, in much the same way as the name "Guermantes" (when I had not seen the Guermantes family for a long time) contained so much of feudalism for me—just as *François le Champi* contained the essence of the novel—and for an instant it replaced the very general idea as to what George Sand's novels of the Berry country are. At a dinner party, where thought is always superficial, I might, of course, have talked of *François le Champi* and the Guermantes without their being, either of them, those I had known at Combray. But when I was alone, as at this moment, I plunged far deeper into my thoughts. At that time, the idea that some person whose acquaintance I had made in society was a cousin of Mme. de Guermantes, that is to say, of a magic-lantern personage, was more than I could grasp, and quite as incomprehensible was the suggestion that the most beautiful books I had read might be—I will not say superior (which they were, however) but even equal to that extraordinary *François le Champi* This was an impression of my very early days, in which the memories of childhood and the home were tenderly intermingled, and I had not recognised it at once. The first instant I angrily asked myself who was the stranger that came thus to cause me pain, and that stranger was my own self, the child I had been in those days, aroused within me by this book, which, not knowing me except as this child, had instantly called him forth, wishing to be gazed at by his eyes alone, loved only by his heart, and to talk to no one but him. And that is why this book, which my mother had read aloud to me at Combray almost until early morning, had retained for me all the spell of that night. It is true that "the pen"

of George Sand (to borrow a favourite expression of Brichot, who loved to say that a book was "written with a lively pen") did not at all seem to me to be a magic pen, as it had for so long to my mother, before she gradually came to pattern her literary tastes on mine. But it was a pen that I had unwittingly magnetised, as schoolboys often amuse themselves doing, and now a thousand little details of Combray, which I had not seen for many a year, came nimbly dancing along of their own accord, one behind the other, and hung themselves on the nib of that electrified pen in an endless chain of tremulous memories. Certain minds which are fond of mystery maintain that objects retain something from the eyes that have gazed upon them, that monuments and pictures are visible to us only through the perceptible veil woven for them by the love and contemplation of many worshippers throughout the centuries. This fantasy would become true if they would transfer it into the field of the only reality that exists for each of us, our own sensitiveness to impressions.

Yes, in that sense and that sense only, but it is even more extensive, something we looked at long ago, if we see it again, brings back to us, along with the look we cast upon it, all the images it conveyed to us at that time. This is because things—a book in its red binding, like so many others—as soon as we take conscious notice of them, become something immaterial within us of the same character as all our sensations and preoccupations of that moment and combine indissolubly with them. Some name we read in a book in bygone years, for example, contains among its syllables the strong breeze and brilliant sunshine of the day when we came across it. In the slightest sensation conveyed to us by the most ordinary food—the fragrance of a cup of coffee, for instance—we recapture that vague hope of fair weather which beguiled us so often in the uncertainty of the morning sky when the day was still intact and full. An hour is a vase filled with perfumes, with sounds, with moments, with changing moods and climates. Consequently,

that literature which is satisfied to "describe * objects," to give merely a miserable listing of lines and surfaces, is the very one which, while styling itself "realist," is the farthest removed from reality, the one that impoverishes and saddens us the most, for it sharply cuts off all communication of our present self with the past, the essence of which was preserved in those objects, or with the future, in which they stimulate us to enjoy the past anew. It is that essence which art worthy of the name must express and, if it fails to do this, one can even then draw a lesson from its failure (whereas one draws no lesson from even the successes of realism) namely, that this essence is in part subjective and cannot be communicated to others.

More than that, a thing we saw at a certain period, or a book we once read, does not remain forever associated solely with what was about us at that time; they are attached quite as faithfully to what we then were and they can be lived through again only by the conglomerate of sensations, the person, we then were. In this library, if I pick up *François le Champi* again, even in thought, there immediately rises within me a child who takes my place and alone has the right to read that title, *François le Champi*, and who reads it as he did years ago, with the same impression of the weather out in the garden, the same dreams as he dreamed that day about far-away lands and life, the same anguish about the morrow. But let me see some object from another bygone time and a different young man will arise within me. And my inner self of to-day is merely an abandoned quarry which believes that all the marble it contains is uniform and monotonous, but out of which each remembrance, like a Greek sculptor, carves innumerable statues I purposely said "some object," for books act in this respect the same as objects, and the way a book used to open, or the grain of the paper may have retained as keen a remembrance of what I

* The word *décimer* which occurs here in the French original would seem to be a misprint for *décrire*, which appears a few pages further on in the same connexion and similarly between quotes —*F.A B.*

imagined Venice to be like, for instance, and my longing to go there, as the sentences themselves. Even keener, for the latter are sometimes a hindrance, like photographs of a person, which prevent one from recalling him as well as if one were satisfied merely to think about him. It is true, with many books of my childhood (and, alas, even with some of Bergotte's) if I happened to pick them up some evening when I was tired, I did it, I must admit, only as I might have taken a train, in the hope of resting my spirit with the sight of different objects and a breath of air from olden times. But it happens also that the much-desired recalling of things past is actually hampered by a prolonged reading of the book. There is one book by Bergotte (the copy in the Prince's library bore an extremely fawning and platitudinous inscription) which I read all through in one winter's day long ago, when I could not see Gilberte, and now I cannot manage to find the pages I loved so much. Certain words here and there make me think it might be those pages, but that is impossible, for where then, can be the beauty I thought I found there? But the snow that covered the Champs-Elysées the day I read that book still lies upon it; I can see it still. And that is why, if I had been tempted to be a book collector, as the Prince de Guermantes was, I would have been one of a very peculiar sort, seeking that beauty which is independent of the "value" of a book, properly speaking, and which it possesses for booklovers because of their knowing the libraries it has passed through, or that it was given to this or that famous man by this or that sovereign on the occasion of some special event, and through their having followed it from sale to sale throughout its career; this historic beauty of a book, so to speak, would not be lost for me. But I would more gladly extract it from the history of my own life than merely as a connoisseur and for me it would often reside, not in one specific copy, but in the work itself, as in this *François le Champi*, which I had contemplated for the first time in my little room at Combray during what was, perhaps, the sweetest and the saddest night

of my life (when I had, alas—at a time when the mysterious Guermantes seemed to me very inaccessible—obtained from my parents the initial abdication, from which I can date the decline in my health and my will power and the daily increasing habit of postponing a difficult task) and rediscovered to-day in the Guermantes library on the most beautiful day of my life, as it happened, when a great light suddenly shone, not only on the old gropings of my thought, but even on the purpose of my life and, perhaps, of art itself. As for the individual volumes themselves, I would, by the way, have been able to take an interest in them, but only by giving living meanings to the terms. The first edition of a work would have been more precious to me than the others, but I would have understood by that the edition in which I read it for the first time. I would look for original editions, by which I mean editions from which I received an original impression. For the later impressions are no longer original. I would seek for the novels old-fashioned bindings, of the time when I read my first novels, in those days when my father used so often to say to me, "Stand up straight" Like the dress in which we saw a woman for the first time, they would help me recapture the love that filled me then, the first beauty, on which I have superposed so many images, less and less dear, trying to recapture the first one when I am not the "I" who saw them and must give place to the "I" which I was at that time in order that he may call forth the thing he knew, which my present self does not know at all. And the library I would build up in this way would be even more precious, for the books I read in years past in Combray, in Venice, now enriched by memory with vast illuminations representing the church of Saint-Hilaire, the [illegible]

story form, which the booklover never opens in order to read the text but to charm himself again with the colours added to it by some rival of Fouquet, which give the volume

all its value. And yet, after all, not to open the books one read in earlier days except to look at illustrations with which they were not embellished at that time would still seem to me so dangerous that I would not be tempted to be a book collector even in the sense I have described, the only one I could understand. I know too well how easily the pictures left by the mind can be effaced by the mind. For the old ones it substitutes new ones which do not have the same power of resurrection. If I still possessed the copy of *François le Champi* which Mamma one evening took out of the package of books my grandmother was to give me for my birthday, I would never look at it; I would be too afraid of inserting in it little by little my impressions of to-day, covering completely those of former years; I would be too afraid of seeing it become so completely a thing of the present that, when I asked it to call forth again the child who spelled out its title in the little room at Combray, not recognising its voice, he might not respond any longer to its call and might remain forever buried in oblivion.

* * *

The idea of a popular art, like that of a patriotic art, seemed to me ridiculous, even if it had not been dangerous. If it was a question of making art accessible to the people, the perfections of form, "good for the idle class," were sacrificed. Now, I had been among society folk enough to know that they, not the electrical workers, are the real illiterates In this respect, an art popular in form would have been more properly designed for the members of the Jockey Club than the Confédération Générale du Travail. As to subjects, the common people are carried away by popular novels just about as much as children are by the books written specially for them. In one's reading one seeks to get out of the ordinary environment, and workingmen are as much interested in princes as princes are in workingmen. At the very beginning of the war M. Barrès declared that the artist (in this case it was Titian) should first of all serve the glory

of his country. But he can serve it only by being an artist or, in other words, on condition that when he is studying

imitate the Revolutionists who out of "civic spirit" scorned, if they did not actually destroy, the works of Watteau and La Tour, painters who were a greater honour to France than all the artists of the Revolution. Anatomy is, perhaps, not what a tender-hearted person would select if he had the choice. It was not out of the kindness of his virtuous heart —and he was very kind—that Choderlos de Laclos wrote *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, nor because of his liking for the *petite bourgeoisie*—or the *grande*, either—that Flaubert selected for subjects those of *Madame Bovary* and *L'Education Sentimentale*. Some said that the art of a period of hurry would be concise—just as others predicted before the war that it would not last long. In like manner the railroad was to kill meditation, it was useless to long for the days of stage-coaches; but the automobile performs their functions and again sets the tourists down near the abandoned churches.

An image presented by life brings us in reality at that moment multiple and varying sensations For example, the sight of the cover of a book one has previously read retains, woven into the letters of its title, the moonbeams of a far-off summer night. The fragrance of the morning cup of coffee brings us that vague hope of fair weather which so often in former years smiled at us in the bright uncertainty of early day as we drank our coffee from a bowl of creamy white china, crinkled like coagulated milk. An hour is not merely an hour. It is a vase filled with perfumes, sounds, plans and climates. What we call reality is a certain relationship between these sensations and the memories which surround us at the same time (a relationship that is destroyed by a bare cinematographic presentation, which gets further away from the truth the more closely it claims to adhere to it) the only true relationship, which the writer must recap-

ture so that he may forever link together in his phrase its two distinct elements. One may list in an interminable description the objects that figured in the place described, but truth will begin only when the writer takes two different objects, establishes their relationship—analogous in the world of art to the sole relationship in the world of science, the law of cause and effect—and encloses them in the necessary rings of a beautiful style, or even when, like life itself, comparing similar qualities in two sensations, he makes their essential nature stand out clearly by joining them in a metaphor, in order to remove them from the contingencies of time, and links them together with the indescribable bond of an alliance of words. From this point of view regarding the true path of art, was not nature herself a beginning of art, she who had often allowed me to know the beauty of something only a long time afterwards and only through something else—midday at Combray through the sound of its bells, the mornings at Doncières through the hiccoughs of our hot-water furnace? The relationship may be uninteresting, the objects mediocre and the style bad, but without that relationship there is nothing. The literature that is satisfied merely to "describe things," to furnish a miserable listing of their lines and surfaces, is, notwithstanding its pretensions to realism, the farthest removed from reality, the one that most impoverishes and saddens us, even though it speak of nought but glory and greatness, for it sharply cuts off all communication of our present self with the past, the essence of which the objects preserve, and with the future, in which they stimulate us to enjoy the past again. But there was more than that, I reflected. If reality were merely that by-product of existence, so to speak, approximately identical for everybody—because, when we say "bad weather, war, cab-stand, brightly lighted restaurant, garden in bloom," everyone knows what we mean—if reality were that, then naturally a sort of cinematographic film of these things would be enough and the "style" or the "literature" that departed from their simple theme would be an artificial

hors d'œuvre. But was that truly reality? If I tried to analyse for myself just what takes place in us at the moment when something makes a certain impression on us—as, for example, that day when, as I crossed the bridge over the Vivonne, the shadow of a cloud on the water made me exclaim, "Zut alors!" as I leaped for joy; or when, as I listened to a remark of Bergotte's, all that I caught of my impression was this, which was not particularly appropriate to him: "It's very fine"; or when, irritated by some discourtesy, Bloch uttered these words, not at all suited to such a vulgar experience: "It is simply incredible that anyone would behave that way", or when, flattered at having been cordially received at the Guermantes' and, besides, a bit flustered by their wines, I could not keep from saying to myself half aloud as I left them, "Just the same, they're charming people, with whom it would be delightful to pass one's life"—I perceived that, to describe these impressions, to write that essential book, the only true book, a great writer does not need to invent it, in the current sense of the term, since it already exists in each one of us, but merely to translate it. The duty and the task of a writer are those of translator.

Now while, in cases involving the inaccurate language of injured pride for example, the straightening out of the subjective *oratio obliqua* (which diverges farther and farther from the first impression, which was a cerebral one) until it coincides with the straight line that should have started from the impression, is an arduous process against which our indolence sets up a sullen resistance, there are other cases—where love is involved, for instance—in which this operation becomes positively painful. All our feigned indifference, our indignation against the very natural falsehoods—so like those we resort to ourselves—in a word, all that we have said again and again whenever we were unhappy or betrayed, not only to the beloved one but even, while waiting to see her, continually to ourselves and sometimes

even aloud, breaking the silence of our bedroom with such phrases as, "No, really, such conduct is intolerable," or "I have consented to see you again, but for the last time, and I will not deny that it makes me very sad"—to bring all that back to the truth, based on what we really felt and from which it has wandered so far, means doing away with all that we clung to most strongly, all that formed the content of our impassioned conversations face to face with ourselves, in the midst of feverish plans for letters and other steps to be taken.

Even in our artistic enjoyment, although sought after for the impressions it gives, we are very quickly content to leave those impressions aside as something that cannot be expressed and confine our attention to those phases which allow us to experience the pleasure without analysing the [illegible] we are communi- [illegible] with whom we shall [illegible] alking to them of something which is the same for them as for us, the personal root of our own impression having been eliminated. At the very times when we are the most dispassionate observers of nature, of society, love, even art itself, since every impression has two parts, one of them incorporated in the object and the other prolonged within ourselves and therefore knowable only to us, we are quick to neglect the latter, that is to say, the one part to which we ought to devote our attention, and consider only the other half, which, being outside ourselves, cannot be studied deeply and consequently never will cause us any fatiguing exertion; the slight groove that a musical phrase or the sight of a church made in our consciousness we find it too difficult to try to comprehend. But we play the symphony again and again or keep returning to look at the church, until, in this running away from our own life which we have not the courage to face—they call this "erudition"—we come to know them as well, and in the same manner, as the most learned lover of music or

archæology. How many there are, consequently, who stop at that point and extract nothing from their impression, but go to their graves useless and unsatisfied, like celibates of art. They are tormented by the same regrets as virgins and idlers, regrets that fecund labour would dispel. They are more wrought up over works of art than the real artists, because they do not labour arduously to get to the bottom of their emotional state and therefore it is diffused in outward expression, puts heat into their remarks and blood into their faces; they think they are doing something really great when, after the execution of a work they like, they shout vociferously "Bravo, bravo!" But these manifestations do not force them to seek light on the nature of their love; they do not know what it really is. Meanwhile, this unexpended passion exuberates into even their calmest conversation and leads them to indulge in grand gestures, facial contortions and noddings of the head when they talk of art. "I have been at a concert where they played some music which, I admit, did not thrill me. Then the quartette began and, *nom d'une pipe*, that was another story!" (Here the music lover's face assumes an anxious expression, as if he were saying to himself, "Why, I see sparks, I smell something burning; there must be a fire somewhere!") "Good Lord! what a difference! It was exasperating, it was badly written, but it was stunning! It was not something everybody could appreciate." And yet, ridiculous though these devotees may be, they are not entirely to be scorned. They are nature's first efforts in the process of evolving the artist; they are as shapeless and lacking in viability as the earliest animals, which preceded the present species and were not so constituted as to be able to survive. These weak-willed, sterile dabblers should arouse our sympathy like those first

tell you, old man," adds the dilettante, as he takes your arm, "that's the eighth time I've heard it and I promise

you, it won't be the last." And in truth, since they fail to assimilate the really nourishing part of art, they suffer from a continual need of artistic enjoyment, a gnawing hunger that nothing can satisfy. So they go and applaud the same work for a long time at a stretch, believing also that in being present they are performing a duty, an act of piety, as others regard their attendance at a meeting of a Board of Directors or a funeral. Then come works of a different, even quite contrary, character in literature, painting or music. For the ability to launch new ideas and systems and, especially, to absorb them has always been much more widespread than genuine good taste, even among the producers of art, and this tendency is spreading considerably with the increase in the number of literary reviews and journals—and, along with them, of people who imagine they have been called to be writers and artists. There was a time, for example, when the better element of our youth, the more intelligent and more sincerely interested, no longer cared for any but works having a lofty moral and sociological, even religious significance. They had the idea that that was the criterion of the value of a work, thereby repeating the error of such as David, Chenavard, Brunetière, and others. Instead of Bergotte, whose airiest sentences, as a matter of fact, required much profounder meditation, they preferred writers who seemed more profound only because they did not write as well. "His intricate way of writing is suited only to society people," the democratically minded said, thereby paying society folk a compliment they did not deserve. But the moment our reasoning intelligence tries to judge works of art, there is no longer anything fixed or certain; one can prove anything one wishes to. Whereas the real essence of talent is a gift, an attribute of a cosmic character, the presence of which should first of all be sought for underneath the surface fashions of thought and style, it is by these latter qualities that the critics classify an author. Because of his peremptory tone and his ostentatious scorn of the school that preceded him, they put the mantle

of prophecy on a writer who has no new message to deliver. This constant aberration of the critics is such that a writer should almost prefer to be judged by the public at large (if the latter were not incapable even of understanding what an artist has attempted in a line of effort unfamiliar to it). For the talent of a great writer—which, after all, is merely an instinct religiously hearkened to (while silence is imposed on everything else) perfected and understood—has more in common with the instinctive life of the people than with the superficial verbiage and fluctuating standards of the conventionally recognised judges. Their battle of words begins all over again every ten years—for the kaleidoscope comprises not only society groups, but also social, political and religious ideas, which temporarily spread out more broadly through refraction in the large masses but nevertheless are shortlived, like all ideas whose novelty succeeds in deceiving only minds that are not very exacting as to proofs. Therefore parties and schools have followed one another, attracting to themselves always the same minds, men of only relative intelligence, always prone to partisan enthusiasms which less credulous minds, more exacting in the matter of proofs, avoid. Unfortunately the former, just because they are only half-wits, need to round out their personalities with action; therefore they are more active than the superior minds, attract the crowd and build up around themselves, not only exaggerated reputations for some, and unwarranted condemnation of others, but civil and foreign wars, which it ought to be possible to escape with a little non-royalist self-criticism. And as for the pleasure that a perfectly balanced mind, a heart that is truly alive finds in the beautiful thought of some master, it is no doubt wholly sound, but however precious may be the men who are capable of enjoying it (how many are there in twenty years?) it nevertheless reduces them to the condition of being merely the full consciousness of someone else. When a man has done everything to win the love of a woman who could only have made him unhappy and, despite repeated efforts over

many years, he has not even been able to obtain a rendezvous with [illegible] the da [illegible] from La Bruyère, annotating it with "a million words" and the most moving memories of his own life: "Men often want to love and do not know how to succeed in so doing; they seek defeat but are not able to find it, so that, if I may so express it, they are forced to remain free." Whether he who wrote that *pensée* intended it so or not (and then it should read "be loved," instead of "love," and it would be finer that way) it is certain that the sensitive man of letters referred to gives it life, fills it with meaning to the point of bursting and cannot repeat it without overflowing with joy to find it so true and beautiful, and yet he has added hardly anything to it and there remains merely the *pensée* of La Bruyère.

How could documentary realism have any value at all, since it is underneath little details such as it notes down that reality is hidden—the grandeur in the distant sound of an airplane or in the lines of the spires of Saint-Hilaire, the past contained in the savour of a *madeleine*, and so forth —and they have no meaning if one does not extract it from them.

Stored up little by little in our memory, it is the chain of all the inaccurate impressions, in which there is nothing left of what we really experienced, which constitutes for us our thoughts, our life, reality, and a so-called "art taken from life" would simply reproduce that lie, an art as thin and poor as life itself, without any beauty, a repetition of what our eyes see and our intelligence notes, so wearisome and futile that one is at a loss to understand where the artist who devotes himself to that finds the joyous, energising spark that can stimulate him to activity and enable him to go forward with his task. The grandeur of real art, on the contrary, art that M. de Norpois would have called "a pastime for dilettanti," is to rediscover, grasp again and lay before us that reality from which we live so far removed

and from which we become more and more separated as the formal knowledge which we substitute for it grows in thickness and imperviousness—that reality which there is grave danger we might die without ever having known and yet which is simply our life, life as it really is, life disclosed at last and made clear, consequently the only life that is really lived, that life which in one sense is to be found at every moment in every man, as well as in the artist. But men fail to see it because they do not try to get light on it. And thus their past is encumbered with countless photographic negatives which lie there useless because the intelligence has not "developed" them. To grasp again our life—and also the life of others; for style is for the writer, as for the painter, a question, not of technique but of vision. It is the revelation—impossible by direct and conscious means—of the qualitative differences in the way the world appears to us, differences which, but for art, would remain the eternal secret of each of us. Only by art can we get outside ourselves, know what another sees of this universe, which is not the same as ours and the different views of which would otherwise have remained as unknown to us as those there may be on the moon. Thanks to art, instead of seeing only one world, our own, we see it under multiple forms, and as many as there are original artists, just so many worlds have we at our disposal, differing more widely from one another than those that roll through infinite space, and years after the glowing center from which they emanated has been extinguished, be it called Rembrandt or Vermeer, they continue to send us their own rays of light.

This work of the artist, to seek to discern something different underneath material, experience, words, is exactly the reverse of the process which, during every minute that we live with our attention diverted from ourselves, is being carried on within us by pride, passion, intelligence and also by our habits, when they hide our true impressions from us by burying them under the mass of nomenclatures and practical aims which we erroneously call life. After all, that

art, although so complicated, is actually the only living art. It alone expresses to others and discloses to us our own life, that life which cannot be "observed" and the visible manifestations of which need to be translated and often read backwards and deciphered with much effort. But all the work of our pride, our passion, our imitative spirit, our abstract intelligence, art will undo and will make us retrace our steps and return to the depths of our own selves, where what has really existed lies unknown to us. And it is, indeed, alluring, this task of re-creating the true life and reviving the youthful freshness of our impressions, but it calls for courage of every sort—even sentimental—for it means, first of all, giving up our dearest illusions, ceasing to believe in the objectivity of what we have ourselves built up, and instead of lulling ourselves for the hundredth time with the words, "She was very sweet," reading behind all this, "I enjoyed having her in my embrace." It is true, what I experienced in those hours of love, all men undergo likewise. One goes through an experience, but what one has felt is like these negatives which shew nothing but black until they have been held up before a lamp and they, too, must be looked at from the reverse side; one has no idea what they contain until they have been held up before the intelligence, and only when it has thrown light upon them and intellectualised them do we distinguish—and with what effort!—the outline of what we have felt. But I also realised that the suffering I had at first undergone with Gilberte at the thought that our love does not belong to the one who inspires it, is incidentally salutary as a means to an end. For, however short our life is to be, it is only while we are suffering that our thoughts, as though stirred by perpetual, changing movements, bring up within our range of vision, as in a storm, all that boundless world, governed by laws, but of which we had no view from our ill-placed window, for the calm of happiness leaves it all too smooth and below our range of vision; perhaps only in a few great geniuses does this up-surging constantly go on without their having

need to be stirred by suffering; and yet, perhaps, when we study the abundant and regular development of their joyous work, we are too much inclined to infer that their lives were joyful also, whereas, on the contrary, they may have been continually filled with sorrow. But the principal reason is that, if we do not love solely a Gilberte, then what made us suffer so keenly was not that we loved also an Albertine, but that our love is a portion of our soul more lasting than the various selves which die successively in us and which would selfishly like to retain this love—a portion of our soul which, regardless of the useful suffering this may cause us, must det [illegible] in order to make clear to t [illegible] love, an [illegible] universal intelligence, and not first to this woman, then to that, in whom this one and that of our successive selves seek to lose their identity.

My task, then, I reflected, was to re-establish the significance of even the slightest signs by which I was surrounded (the Guermantes, Albertine, Gilberte, Saint-Loup, Balbec and so forth) long familiarity having destroyed their meaning for me. We have to bear in mind that when we shall have attained reality, we shall not be able to express it and preserve it for all time unless we put aside all that is different from it and is being continually suggested to us by the haste that comes from habit. More than anything else, I would exclude, therefore, all those remarks that come from the lips rather than the mind, clever remarks such as one makes in conversation and which, after a long conversation with others, one continues to utter in imaginary discussions with oneself, so that they fill the mind with lies, those entirely mechanical remarks which any writer who so lowers himself as to use them accompanies with a little smile, a little grimace such as constantly disfigures the spoken phrase of a Sainte-Beuve, for example, whereas real books must be the product, not of broad daylight and small talk but of darkness and silence. And since art is a faithful

re-composing of life, around the verities which one has finally found within oneself there will always float an atmosphere of poetry, the sweetness of a mystery which is only the last traces of the semi-darkness we have had to pass through, the measure of the profundity of a work of art, indicated with precision as by a depth gauge. (For this profundity is not inherent in certain subjects, as some materialistically spiritualist novelists believe because they themselves cannot go below the world of outward appearances, and all their noble intentions, like the virtuous harangues characteristic of certain people incapable of the slightest kindly effort, should not blind us to the fact that they have not had strength of mind enough even to rid themselves of all the hackneyed forms acquired by imitation.

As for the truths which the intelligence—even that of the finest minds—garners right out in the open, lying before it in broad daylight, their value may be very great, but they have harsher outlines and are all on the surface, with no depth, because no depths had to be penetrated in order to get to them and they have not been re-created. Often writers in whom one no longer discerns these mysterious truths, after a certain age write only with their intelligence, which has acquired more and more power; for this reason the books of their mature period have more force than those of their youth, but no longer the same velvety smoothness.

And yet I felt that these truths which the intelligence draws directly from reality are not entirely to be scorned, for it may be that they enchase, in a grosser substance, it is true, but nevertheless pierce with understanding those impressions which are brought to us, outside of all considerations of time, by the essential qualities common to sensations of the past and the present, but which, being more precious, are too rare for the work of art to be composed wholly of them. I felt surging within me a multitude of truths concerning passions, characters and customs which might well serve in that manner. Every person who makes us suffer we can associate with a divinity, of which that person

is only a fragmentary reflexion—the lowest step of the approach to the temple, as it were—and the contemplation of this divinity as a pure idea gives us instant joy in place of the sorrow we were suffering; the entire art of living consists in making use of those who cause us suffering only as so many steps enabling us to draw nearer to its divine form and thus daily people our life with divinities. The perception of these truths brought me joy, and yet I seemed to remember that more than one of them I had discovered through suffering and others in the midst of very commonplace pleasures. And then a new light dawned within me, less brilliant, it is true, than the one which had disclosed to me that the work of art is our only means of recapturing the past. And I understood that all these materials for literary work were nothing else than my past life and that they had come to me in the midst of frivolous pleasures, in idleness, through tender affection and through sorrow, and that I had stored them up without foreseeing their final purpose or even their survival, any more than does the seed when it lays by all the sustenance that is going to nourish the seedling. Like the seed, I might die as soon as the plant had been formed, and I found that I had been living for this seedling without knowing it, without any indication whatsoever that my life would ever witness the realisation of those books I so longed to write but for which I used to find no subject when I sat down at my table. And so my entire life up to that day could—and, from another point of view, could not—be summed up under the title, *A Vocation*. It could not, in the sense that literature had not played any part in my life as yet. But it could, on the other hand, in that my life, the memories of its sorrows and its joys, constituted a reserve after the manner of the albumen stored in the ovule of plants, from which it draws its nutrition in order to develop into a seed, long before there is anything to shew that the embryo of a plant is developing, although it is the repository of secret but very active chemical and respiratory phenomena. Thus my life was in contact with

the forces that would bring about its maturation, and those who might in after years draw sustenance from it would know nothing of what had been done for their nourishment, just as those who eat the edible grains little know that the rich substances they contain first nourished the seed and made possible its development. In this matter the same comparison may be false as a starting-point but true as a conclusion The writer envies the painter; he would like to take sketches and notes—he is ruined as a writer if he does so. But when he writes, there is not a gesture of one of his characters, not a single nervous mannerism or intonation that was not suggested to him by his memory; there is not a single fictitious name of a character under which he could not write the names of sixty persons he has actually seen, one of whom posed for the grimace, another for the monocle, this one for the anger, that one for the becoming movement of the arm, and so on. And then the writer realises that, if his dream of being a painter could not come true in a conscious and intentional manner, it has happened to come true anyhow, and the writer finds that he, too, has been making a sketchbook without knowing it. For, impelled by the instinct that was in him, long before he thought he might some day be a writer, he systematically ignored so many things which caught the attention of others that he was accused of being absent-minded and himself thought that he could neither listen nor observe. But all the while he was instructing his eyes and ears to retain forever what seemed to the others to be childish trifles—the tone in which a sentence had been spoken, the facial expression and movement of the shoulders of someone about whom perhaps he knows nothing else—all this many years ago and only because he had heard that tone of voice before or felt that he might hear it again, that it was something enduring, something which might recur; it is the feeling for the general which in the future writer automatically selects what is general and can therefore enter into a work of art. For he has listened to the others only when, however mad

or foolish they were, by repeating parrot-like what people of like character say, they had thereby become the prophet-birds, the spokesmen for a psychological law. He retains in his memory only what is of a general character. By such intonations, such play of the features, such movements of the shoulders, even if they were seen in his now distant childhood, the life of others is pictured in his mind and when, later on, he comes to write, it will be useful to him for re-creating reality either by composing a movement of the shoulders common to many (and as true to life as if it had been taken down in the notebook of an anatomist, but sketched in this case to express a psychological truth) or by attaching to that movement of the shoulders a movement of the neck characteristic of someone else, each of them having contributed his pose of an instant.

It is quite possible that, to produce a literary work, imagination and sensib

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sensitive to impressions but without imagination, might nevertheless write admirable novels. The suffering caused him by others, his attempts to forestall it, the conflicts provoked by his suffering and the other cruel person—all that, interpreted by his intelligence, might furnish the material for a book not only as fine as if it had been imagined and invented, but also as completely foreign to the author's reveries as if he had been absorbed in himself and happy, as surprising to him and as much the product of chance as an accidental caprice of the imagination. Even the human beings most stupid as to gestures, remarks and spontaneously expressed sentiments demonstrate laws that they are not aware of but which the artist unexpectedly discovers in them. Because of his studies of this type, the common herd considers the writer unkind, but without justification because in a ridiculous trait the artist sees a splendid generality, which he does not count to the discredit of the person under

observation any more than the surgeon would despise him for being afflicted with a rather frequent disturbance of the circulation. That is why the artist scoffs at ridiculous traits less than anyone else. Unfortunately, he is more unhappy than unkind when it comes to his own strong feelings; although he knows quite as well their general character, it is less easy for him to free himself of the personal suffering they cause. Of course, when some insolent fellow insults us, we would have preferred that he praise us; and still more, when a woman we adore betrays us, what would we not give to have it otherwise! But our resentment of the insult, our grief over the desertion will then prove to be strange lands which we would otherwise never have known and the discovery of which, however painful to the man, becomes priceless to the artist. And that is why the mean-spirited and the ingrate figure in his work, in spite of him and them. The pamphleteer involuntarily shares his fame with the rascal he has pilloried. One can recognise in every work of art the men whom the artist has hated most intensely and, alas, even the women he has loved most deeply. The latter were only posing for the writer at the very moment when, against his will, they were causing him the most suffering. When I was in love with Albertine, I realised clearly that she did not love me and I was forced to reconcile myself to merely learning from her what it is to experience suffering, love and, at first, even happiness. And when we endeavour to extract the general qualities from our sorrow and to write about it, we are somewhat consoled, perhaps for a still different reason from any of those I have given here, which is that thinking in terms of generalities and writing comprise for the writer a healthful and indispensable function, the fulfilling of which brings happiness, as do for a man of a physical type exercise, sweating and the bath. To be frank, I rebelled somewhat against that. It is true, I believed that the supreme truth of life is in art; it is true, on the other hand, that I was no more capable of the effort of memory which would have been required to

love Albertine again than to mourn again for my grandmother; nevertheless I questioned whether a work of art of which they should have no knowledge would accomplish anything for them, for the destiny of these dear departed ones. My grandmother, whom I with such indifference had seen go through her last agony and die close beside me—oh, might I in expiation, when my work should be completed, wounded beyond relief and abandoned by all, suffer for long and weary hours before I died! In addition, I felt infinite pity even for beings less dear, even for those to whom I was indifferent, and for so many human destinies the suffering and even the absurdities of which my thought had made use of as it endeavoured t [illegible]
who had revealed trut [illegible]
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one but me, and to have died for me. It was sad for me to think that my love, which had meant so much to me, would be so detached in my book from any person that different readers would make it apply closely to the love they had felt for other women. But should I be shocked at this posthumous infidelity, or that this or that man might substitute unknown women as objects of the sentiments expressed in my book, when this infidelity and this division of love among several beings had begun in my lifetime and even before I had started to write? I had suffered much for Gilberte, for Mme. de Guermantes and for Albertine in succession. Successively, too, I had forgotten them, and only my love itself, addressed to, bestowed on different beings, had been enduring. The profanation of one of my memories by unknown readers I had already consummated ahead of them. I was not far from feeling horror of myself, as might some nationalist party in whose name hostilities had been carried on and which alone had benefited from a war in which so many noble victims had suffered and succumbed without even knowing the outcome of the struggle—which would have been such a compensation to my grandmother, at least. And the only consolation for her not knowing that

I was finally setting myself to work was that—such is the lot of the dead—even if she could not rejoice in my progress, at least she had long since ceased to be conscious of my inactivity, of my wasted life, which had been such a sorrow to her. And certainly there would not be only my grandmother and Albertine, but many others besides, from whom I had appropriated a word or a glance but whom I no longer recalled as individual creatures. A book is a great cemetery in which one can no longer decipher the half-effaced names on most of the graves. Sometimes, on the contrary, one recalls the name very well but cannot remember whether anything of the person himself survives in these pages. That young girl with the deep-set eyes and the indolent manner of speech, is she here? And if she does lie here, one no longer knows in what part and how can one find out under all the flowers? But since we live withdrawn from individual human beings, since we soon forget our strongest feelings, such as my love for my grandmother and for Albertine, and they become for us no more than a word we do not understand and we are able to talk of them with society folk, to whose houses we are still glad to go, albeit those we loved are all dead, then if there exists a way for us to learn to understand these forgotten words, should we not employ it, even though it be necessary first to transcribe them into a universal language, which at any rate will be permanent and would make of our lost ones, in the truest essence of their natures, an eternal acquisition for all human beings? And even this law of change, which made those words unintelligible for us, if we succeed in explaining it, does not our inferiority become a new source of strength? Furthermore, the work in which our sorrows have collaborated can be interpreted both as an evil omen of suffering yet to come and as a happy sign of consolation in the future. In truth, when we say that his loves and his sorrows have been helpful to the poet and have aided him to construct his work, that unknown women have quite unsuspectingly, one with a meanness, another with a mockery, brought each her

stone for the building of the monument they will never see, we do not sufficiently take into consideration that the life of the writer does not end with this work, that the same ter[illegible] wh[illegible] exi[illegible] in[illegible] the[illegible] the[illegible] lov[illegible] mi[illegible] happy love which is the certain forerunner of others and will result in the poet's life resembling his work, so that he will have scarcely any more need to write, such a faithful forecast of what is to come will he be able to find in what he has already written. Thus my love for Albertine, with all its points of difference, was already recorded in advance in my love for Gilberte, in the midst of those happy days when Albertine's aunt first mentioned her name and described her to me, without my suspecting that this insignificant germ would develop and one day engross my whole existence. But from another point of view, the work is a promise of happiness, because it teaches us that in every love the general is to be found beside the particular and that we should pass from the latter to the former by an exercise which fortifies us against suffering by shewing us how to ignore its cause and study deeply its essential nature. And in truth, as I was to find out by experience later on, even at the very time the artist loves and suffers, if he has finally achieved his true vocation, during the hours of work he feels so clearly the loved one merge into a vaster reality that he finally comes to forget her at times and to suffer no more from his love while at his work than as though it were some purely physical malady in which the loved one had no part, a sort of cardiac ailment. It is true that this is only for a few moments now and then, and the effect seems to be quite the opposite if the congenial work comes later.

For when the human beings who by their evil character or their lack of character managed, in spite of us, to destroy our illusions have themselves been reduced to nothingness and separated from the amorous delusion we had constructed for ourselves, if then we set ourselves to work, our soul resuscitates these beings and, for our own purposes of self-analysis, considers them the same as others who had loved us, and in this case literature, taking up again the abandoned labours of the amorous illusion, confers a sort of renewal of life on sentiments that had already ceased to exist. It is true, we are obliged to go through our own individual suffering again, with the courage of the doctor who repeats on himself the dangerous inoculation. But at the same time we have to represent it to ourselves in a general form and this enables us to a certain extent to escape its strangling grip, makes the whole world share in our suffering with us and is not without even a certain joy. When life walls us in, our intelligence cuts an opening, for, though there be no remedy for an unrequited love, one can win release from suffering, even if only by drawing from it the lessons it has to teach. The intelligence does not recognise in life any closed situations without an outlet. Therefore, since nothing can last if it does not become general or if the mind lies to itself, I was forced to resign myself to the idea that even those dearest to the writer were in the last analysis merely posing for him, as it is with painters. Sometimes, when a painful study has been left merely sketched in, a new affection or fresh suffering comes to help us fill it in and complete it. As to those great sorrows which serve a useful purpose, we have not much cause for complaint, for there is no lack of them, they come in quick succession. Nevertheless, we should hasten to take advantage of them, for they do not last very long because we quickly console ourselves or else, when they are too violent and the heart is not very strong, we die. In love, our fortunate rival—otherwise styled our enemy—is really our benefactor. To someone who had aroused in us merely an

insignificant physical desire, he immediately adds an immense value, foreign to her, it is true, but which we attribute to her. If we had no rivals, physical pleasure would not develop into love—if we had none or did not think we had, for it is not necessary that they really exist. Sufficient for our good is the illusory existence bestowed on purely imaginary rivals by our suspicions and our jealousy. Happiness is beneficial for the body but it is grief that develops the powers of the mind. Moreover, even if it did not each time disclose to us a law, it would nevertheless be indispensable for bringing us back to the truth, forcing us to take things in serious vein, by uprooting each time the tangled growth of habits, skepticism, flippancy, indifference. It is true that grief, which is not compatible with happiness or health, is sometimes prejudicial also to life. In the end, sorrow kills. At each fresh, overpowering shock we feel another vein stand out and develop its deadly swellings along our temples, beneath our eyes. Thus were produced little by little those terrible, grief-ravaged faces of the aged Rembrandt and the aged Beethoven, whom everyone used to scoff at. And the pouches under the eyes and wrinkles on the brow would be nothing if there were not also the suffering in the heart. But since forces can change their nature and sustained heat become light and the electricity of lightning record a photograph, since the dull ache at our heart can raise, as it were, a banner for each fresh sorrow, the permanent symbol of an inner image, let us accept the physical injury it inflicts because of the spiritual wisdom that it brings; let us allow our body to disintegrate, since each fresh particle that breaks off, now luminous and decipherable, comes and adds itself to our work to complete it at the cost of suffering superfluous to others more gifted and to make it more and more substantial as emotions gradually chip away our life. Ideas take the place of sorrows; when the latter are transformed into ideas, they at once lose part of their noxious effect on the heart and from the very first moment the transformation itself radiates

joy. But ideas succeed sorrows only as a matter of chronology, for the idea would seem to be the original element, and the sorrow only the form under which certain ideas first enter our consciousness. But there are several families in the group of ideas and some are joys from the very start. These reflexions suggested to me a more vigorous and more correct meaning for the truth I had often dimly felt, especially when Mme. de Cambremer used to wonder how I could neglect the company of a remarkable man like Elstir for that of Albertine. Even from the intellectual point of view I felt that she was wrong, but I did not realise that what she failed to understand was the kind of lessons a man of letters needs in serving his apprenticeship. For that the objective value of the arts is meagre; what it is necessary to draw out, to bring forth into the light, is our feelings, our passions—that is to say, the passions and feelings of everyone. A woman for whom we have a great longing causes us suffering, draws from us long series of feelings far more profound and vital than would an exceptional man who has aroused our interest. It remains to be determined, dependent upon the plane on which we live, whether we consider that a certain betrayal by which a woman has made us suffer is of little consequence compared to the truths this betrayal has disclosed to us, which the woman, happy to have made us suffer, could scarcely have comprehended. In any case there is no lack of these betrayals; the writer may embark upon a long work without apprehension. Let the intelligence but begin its task and there will come up along the way sorrows in plenty which will undertake to complete it. As for happiness, it has hardly more than one useful quality, namely to make unhappiness possible. In our happiness, we should form very sweet bonds, full of confidence and attachment, in order that the sundering of them may cause us that priceless rending of the heart which is called unhappiness. If one had not been happy, though only in hope and anticipation, the misfortunes would have no cruelty and therefore no good result. And just as the

painter needs to study many churches in order to paint one, even more so must the writer who wishes to acquire volume, substance, generalness, literary reality, study many human beings for a single sentiment, for if it is true that "art is long and life is fleeting," one can on the other hand say that, if inspiration is fleeting, the sentiments it has to paint are not much more lasting. It is our moments of suffering that outline our books and the intervals of respite that write them. When our inspiration revives and we are able to take up our work again, the woman who posed for us for a certain sentiment is already no longer able to make us feel it. We have to complete her portrait from another model and, even though this involve infidelity to the first woman, there is no great disadvantage in these substitutions from the literary point of view, thanks to the similarity of our feelings, which makes a book at the same time a record of our past loves and a chronicle of our new ones. That is one of the reasons for the worthlessness of those studies which seek to discover the originals of the personages in a book. For a book, even one of outright confession, is interpolated between various episodes of the author's life, those before it, which inspired it, and those which come after and resemble it quite as much, the details of the later loves being closely patterned on the earlier ones. For we are more faithful to our own selves than even to the one we have the most deeply loved, and we forget her in time and fall in love again, since that is one of the traits of our character. At the very most the woman we loved so deeply added an individual form to this love which will hold us faithful to her even in our infidelity. With the next woman we shall feel the same need of morning walks or of accompanying her home at the end of the day or of giving her far too much money. (It is a curious thing, this circulation of the money we give to women who because of that make us unhappy, that is to say, make it possible for us to write books; one might almost say that works of art, like artesian wells, mount higher in proportion as the suffering has more

deeply pierced the heart.) These substitutions give the book an impersonal, more general character and this is at the same time a stern admonition that we should not devote our attention to persons but to ideas, which have a real existence and are therefore susceptible of expression. And even at that the writer must hasten and not waste time while he has these models at his disposal. For those who pose to represent happiness seldom have many sittings to give us. But those who pose for sorrow grant us many sittings in that studio to which we repair only at those times, our inner self. Those periods are, as it were, a representation of our life with its various sorrows, for they also contain different sorrows and a new one, new in every meaning of the word, just when we thought calm had come, perhaps because these unforeseen situations force us to come more deeply into contact with ourselves; these painful dilemmas which love continually presents instruct us and gradually disclose to us the substance of which we are made.

Furthermore, even when suffering does not supply, by disclosing it to us, the subject matter of our work, it is useful by impelling us to undertake it. Imagination and reflexion may be admirable machines in themselves but they may stand idle unless suffering furnishes the motive power. Therefore when Françoise, seeing Albertine enjoy the free run of my house like a pet dog, turn everything upside down, involve me in too heavy expense and cause me so much heartache, said to me (for at that time I had already written some articles and a few translations), "Ah, if, instead of that hussy who makes you waste your time, you had taken on a refined young man to act as secretary and keep all those old papers in order," I was, perhaps, mistaken in thinking she was talking wisely. By making me waste my time and by causing me unhappiness Albertine had perhaps been more useful to me, even from the literary point of view, than a private secretary who might have arranged my "old papers" in an orderly file. But nevertheless, when a living being—and perhaps in nature that creature is man—is so poorly

constituted that he cannot love without suffering and must suffer in order to learn new truths, the existence of such a creature becomes very wearying in the long run. Happy years are wasted years; we wait for suffering before setting to work. The idea of suffering as an ineluctable prerequisite has become associated in our minds with the idea of work; we dread each new undertaking because of the suffering we know we must first go through to formulate it in our imagination. And when we understand that suffering is the best thing we can encounter in life, we contemplate death without dismay as a sort of emancipation. However, if I was inclined to rebel at that thought, I still had to take into consideration that very often we have not played with life, made the most of our human contacts for the benefit of our books, but quite the contrary. The case of Werther, such a noble one, was not, alas, my own. Without believing an instant in Albertine's love, I had wanted to commit suicide for her a score of times, I had ruined myself for her financially and physically. When it comes to writing, we take infinite pains, we examine very closely, we reject whatever is not true. But when it is merely our life that is at stake, we ruin ourselves, wreck our health, commit suicide for a lot of lies. It is true that (if one has passed the poetic age) it is from the gangue of those lies that one can extract just a little truth. Our sorrows are obscure, despised servants, whom we struggle against but who gain more and more dominion over us, wretched but irreplaceable servants, who lead us by subterranean passages to the truth and to our death. Fortunate are they who come upon the former before they reach the latter and for whom, however closely they may follow one another, the hour of truth sounds before the call of death.

I understood also that the most trivial incidents of my earlier life had combined to teach me the lesson of idealism that was now going to be so useful to me. My meetings with M. de Charlus, for example, had enabled me—even before his pro-Germanism taught me the same lesson and

better, even, than my love for Mme. de Guermantes or for Albertine or Saint-Loup's love for Rachel—to satisfy myself that the subject is a matter of indifference and that the mind can put anything into it—a truth the importance of which is disclosed even better in the phenomenon of homosexuality, so little understood and so needlessly censured, than in that of normal love, instructive though that is. Love shows us beauty leaving the woman we no longer love and alighting on one whom others would consider most homely and who may have seemed so to us in the past and may again in the future; but it is still more surprising to see it lodge under the cap of an omnibus conductor and win the devoted worship of a noble lord, who straightway abandons a beautiful princess. My astonishment each time I saw again on the Champs-Elysées, in the street, on the beach, the face of Gilberte, of Mme. de Guermantes, of Albertine, did not that demonstrate how steadily a memory of the past diverges at a tangent from the impression with which it coincided at first but from which it draws farther and farther away? The writer should not be offended to see his heroines given masculine countenances by the invert. Only by this somewhat abnormal peculiarity can the latter then give to what he reads its full general value. If M. de Charlus had not attributed Morel's features to the "faithless one" whom Musset weeps over in *La Nuit d'Octobre* or *Souvenir*, he would have neither wept nor understood, since it was only by that route, narrow and roundabout, that he could approach the verities of love. It is only by a habit acquired in the insincere language of prefaces and dedications that the writer says "my readers." In reality, each reader reads only what is already within himself. The book is only a sort of optical instrument which the writer offers to the reader to enable the latter to discover in himself what he would not have found but for the aid of the book. It is this reading within himself what is also in the book which constitutes the proof of the accuracy of the latter and *vice versa*—at least to a certain extent, for any discrepancy between the two

texts should often be laid to the blame of the reader, not the author. Furthermore, the book may be too learned, too obscure, for the simple-minded reader and therefore provide him with only a cloudy glass, through which he will be unable to read. But other peculiarities, such as inversion, may make it necessary for the reader to read in a certain way in order to understand, and the author should not take offence but should give the reader the maximum liberty, saying to him, "See whether you read better with this glass or that, or with

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cal... getting a woman inside our skin," even to the point of making us love passionately for a few minutes an ugly woman, whom in real life we could have come to love only after years of familiarity and cohabitation and with the aid of some miraculous doctor to give us intravenous injections of love—and quite as possibly of suffering also; with the same speed, the amorous suggestion which they impressed on us is dispersed and not only the nocturnal mistress ceases to exist for us as such and becomes again the ugly woman we know so well, but sometimes there is dispersed also something more precious, a fascinating composite of feelings, affection, voluptuous delight, dimly outlined regrets, a whole *Embarquement pour Cythère* of passion, whose delicate shadings of a delicious accuracy we would fain note for our awakening but which disappears from sight like a canvas too faded to be restored. And it was perhaps also by the preposterous game they play with Time that dreams had fascinated me. Had I not often seen in one night, nay, in one minute of one night, dim, remote periods of my life, so far in the past that I could scarcely distinguish any longer the feelings I had had at that time, come rushing down upon me full tilt, blinding me with their brightness, like giant airplanes

instead of the pale stars I believed them to be, bringing me again all they had once held for me, giving me the emotion, the shock, the brilliance of their immediate proximity; and then when I awoke, retrace the distance they had so miraculously crossed at one bound and even make me believe, but mistakenly, that they were one of the means of recapturing the Past?

I realised that only superficial and defective observation attaches all importance to the object, when the mind is everything, I lost my grandmother in reality many months after I had lost her in fact; I had seen persons change in appearance according to the ideas that I or others had of them, or one person appear as several, according to those who were looking at him (such, for example, as the different conceptions of Swann at the beginning of this work, depending on those who met him; or the Princesse de Luxembourg as she seemed to me and as she appeared to the *premier président*) or even when the same person looked at them after several years' interval (the variations of the name "Guermantes" for me and my different ideas of Swann). I had seen a lover attribute to his belovéd qualities that were only in himself. I had come to understand this all the better because I had altered and extended to the utmost the gap between objective reality and love (Rachel as she appeared to Saint-Loup and to me, Albertine to me and to Saint-Loup, Morel or the omnibus conductor to M. de Charlus and to others). Finally, to a certain extent the pro-Germanism of M. de Charlus, like the glance Saint-Loup cast at Albertine's photograph, had helped me free myself for a moment, if not from my Germanophobia, at least from my faith in its pure objecti[illegible]ect that [illegible] t in the [illegible] sing on [illegible] manity, there is above all an objectivity of feeling such as made Rachel appear so precious to Saint-Loup and Albertine to me. What, in fact, made it possible that this perversity was

not wholly peculiar to Germany, was that, just as I as an individual had successive love affairs at the end of which the object of my love appeared worthless to me, just so I had already seen in my country successive hatreds which had, for example, held up as traitors—a thousand times worse than the G[illegible]
be deliverin[illegible]
the patriot[illegible]
member of which was necessarily a liar, a wild beast, an imbecile—except, of course, those Germans who had espoused the French cause, such as the King of Rumania or the Empress of Russia. It is true that the anti-Dreyfusards would have replied, "That's not the same thing." But as a matter of fact, it is never the same thing, any more than it is the same person; otherwise, faced with the same phenomenon, the man who is duped by it could blame only his subjective condition and would not be able to believe that the good or bad qualities are in the object itself.

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come assimilated; undying hatred of the Germans for the Latin race, the yellow race being for the moment restored to favour). This subjective side was noticeable, by the way, in conversation with neutrals, among whom the pro-Germans, for example, had the faculty of temporarily ceasing to understand or even to listen when one mentioned the German atrocities in Belgium. (And yet they were real.) The subjective element I had noticed in hate, as in sight itself, did not prevent the object from having real qualities and defects and did not by any means cause the reality to vanish away into pure "relativism." And if, after so many years had gone by and so much time had passed, I perceived this vital influence of the *lac interne* even in international relations, had I not suspected this at the very outset of my life when reading in the garden at Combray one of those novels by Bergotte which, if I turn a few of their forgotten pages and

read of the schemes of some evil character, I cannot lay aside until I have turned to the end of the book and assured myself that this evil person is properly humiliated and lives long enough to see his dark schemes thwarted? For I no longer remembered just what happened to these characters—in which, moreover, they resembled the persons who were at Mme. de Guermantes' this afternoon and whose past life, in several cases at least, was as vague in my mind as if I had read it in some half-forgotten novel. Did the Prince d'Agrigente finally marry Mlle. X? Or was it her brother who was to have married the Prince's sister? Or was I getting it all confused with something I read long ago or something I had dreamed recently?

As dreams constituted another of the facts in my life which had always struck me most forcibly and must have been the strongest factor in convincing me of the purely mental character of reality, I was not going to scorn their assistance in the writing of my book. When I was living rather selfishly wrapped up in a love affair, a dream brought my grandmother strangely close to me, making her traverse a great extent of intervening time, and likewise Albertine, whom I then began to love once more because in my sleep she had provided for me, albeit attenuated, a version of the affair with the laundress. I reflected that dreams would sometimes in this way bring nearer to me truths or impressions which would not come through my own unaided effort or even through natural contingencies, and that they would awaken in me a desire, a longing for certain non-existent things, which is the prerequisite condition for creative work, for getting out of the rut of habit and getting away from the concrete. I would not scorn this second muse, this nocturnal muse, who would occasionally assume the functions of the other.

I had sometimes seen people of noble birth show a vulgar streak when their mind was vulgar, as in the case of the Duc de Guermantes, for instance, who used to say, "You have some nerve!" as Cottard might have said. In medicine, in the Dreyfus case, in the war, I had seen people believe that

truth is a specific fact which doctors and cabinet ministers have in their possession, a "yes" or "no" that needs no further explanation, so that an X-ray plate would disclose without interpretation what is the matter with the patient, and that those in power knew whether Dreyfus was guilty or, without any need of sending Roques to make an investigation on the spot, whether Sarrail was in a position to move forward at the same time as the Russians. There is not a single hour of my life which would not have served in this way to teach me that, as I have said, it is only a superficial and defective observation which attaches all importance to the object, whereas on the contrary the mind is everything. After all, as I thought it over, the substance of my experience of life came to me from Swann and not merely through everything connected with him and Gilberte. It was he who, away back in the Combray days, gave me the desire to go to Balbec, where my parents would otherwise never have had the idea of sending me, and but for that I would never have met Albertine. Undoubtedly, her face, as I saw her for the first time, outlined against the sea, was the source of inspiration for certain things I would surely write. In one sense this was true, for if I had not gone to walk on the embankment that day and if I had not met her, all those ideas would not have developed (unless possibly through some other woman). But in another sense I was wrong, for this inspirational pleasure we like to find retrospectively in a woman's pretty face comes from our senses; it was, indeed, quite certain that Albertine, and particularly the Albertine of those days, would not have understood those pages I was going to write. But it was just for that reason, just because she was so different from me (and this is a warning that we should not live in too intellectual an atmosphere) that she had given me inspiration through suffering and even, at the very first, simply through the effort one must make to imagine something different from oneself. If she had been able to understand these pages, just because of that she would not have inspired them. But if it had not been for

Swann, I would not even have known the Guermantes, since my grandmother would not then have renewed her acquaintance with Mme de Villeparisis and I would not have met Saint-Loup and M. de Charlus, which led to my meeting the Duchesse de Guermantes and, through her, her cousin, so that it was also through Swann that I happened at this moment to be in the house of the Prince de Guermantes, where the idea of the book I was to write had just come to me suddenly—which meant that I should be indebted to Swann, not only for its subject but also for the decision to undertake it. A rather slender stem, perhaps, to support in this way the entire expanse of my life! (In that sense "Swann's way" had led by chance to this "Guermantes way.")

But very often the unwitting author of certain phases of our life is someone very inferior to Swann, some extremely mediocre person. Might it not have been enough for any chance companion to tell me about some attractive prostitute available at Balbec (whom I probably would never have run across there) for me to go to that place? Often in some such way we later meet an unwelcome comrade and shake hands with him half-heartedly without stopping to recall that it was a random remark of his, an offhand "You ought to come to Balbec," which determined our entire life and our work. We feel no gratitude to him for this but that does not mean that we can be called ungrateful, for when he made that remark, he had no idea of the momentous consequences it was going to have for us. It was our own sensitiveness to impressions and our intelligence which exploited the circumstances, and the latter, once the first start was made, have followed one another in a continuous chain, and Swann could not have foreseen my living with Albertine any more than the masked ball at the Guermantes'. The initial impulse he gave was doubtless necessary and in that way the external character of my life and even the subject matter of my book have been determined by him. But for him my parents would never have had the idea of sending me to Balbec. However, he was not responsible for the suffering

he had himself indirectly caused. That was due to my weakness. His own weakness had made him suffer keenly through Odette. But by thus determining the life I led, he at the same time shut out all the lives I might have led instead. If he had not mentioned Balbec to me, I would never have known Albertine, the hotel dining-room, the Guermantes But I would have gone somewhere else and met other people; my memory, as well as my books, would have been filled with very different pictures, which I cannot even imagine to myself but the unknown novelty of which tempts me and makes me regret that I did not go in their direction instead and never come to know Albertine, and the beaches at Balbec and Rivebelle, and the Guermantes.

Jealousy is a good procurer who, when there is an empty space in our picture, goes out into the street and gets us the good-looking girl we needed. She had lost her beauty but regains it because we are jealous of her. She will fill the void.

Once we are dead, we shall no longer be glad that the picture was completed in this manner, but this thought is not at all discouraging, for we feel that life is somewhat more complicated than people say, and likewise the circumstances. And there is a pressing need of demonstrating this complexity. Jealousy, which can serve such a useful purpose, does not necessarily arise only from a glance, a tale someone brings us or a look cast backward over her shoulder. One may discover jealousy, ready to sting us, hidden among the pages of a year book—*Tout Paris* for the city and *L'Annuaire des Châteaux* for the country. I had once rather absent-mindedly heard a certain good-looking girl, in whom I was no longer interested, mention that she would have to go and visit her sister in the Pas-de-Calais for a few days. Then I had quite as absent-mindedly reflected that Monsieur E. had probably been after the girl but that she was not seeing him any more, as she no longer went to the bar where she used to see him. What might her sister be? A chambermaid, perhaps? In order not to appear inquisitive, I had

not asked. And then lo and behold! on opening *L'Annuaire des Châteaux* at random, I find that Monsieur E. has a château in the Pas-de-Calais near Dunkerque. It's clear now; to please the good-looking girl, he has engaged her sister as chambermaid and the reason why the girl does not meet him in the bar any more is that he now has her come to his apartment, and he lives in Paris almost all the year but cannot do without her while he is at his château. The brushes, drunk with infuriated love, paint and paint! And yet, suppose that is not the explanation? Perhaps Monsieur E. never sees the girl any more but, out of a spirit of helpfulness, had recommended her sister to a brother of his who lives the whole year round in the Pas-de-Calais. So that maybe she happens to be going to see her sister just at a time when Monsieur E. is not at his château, for they are not concerned about one another any more. But then again, perhaps the sister is not a chambermaid at the château or anyhere else, but has relatives in the Pas-de-Calais. The [illegible] er sup- [illegible] conse- [illegible] *ire des Châteaux*, it came at just the right moment and now the empty space in my canvas is filled and the composition is satisfactory, thanks to the presence of the girl, brought about by jealousy, although I am no longer jealous and do not love her any more.

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At this point, the butler came to tell me that the first selection had ended and I could leave the library and go into the drawing-rooms. That recalled to me where I was. But I was not at all disturbed in the line of reasoning I had just started by the fact that it was a social gathering, my return to society life, that had furnished the starting-point for a new life which I had not been able to find in solitude. There was nothing remarkable about this, since an impression which might awaken in me the eternal human being was no more

necessarily linked to solitude than to society—as I had formerly believed and as had perhaps formerly been true in my case and might, perhaps, have still been true if I had developed in a uniform manner, without that long suspension of activity which seemed to be only just coming to an end. For since I received that impression of beauty only when there was superposed upon an immediate sensation, however insignificant, a similar one which, springing up spontaneously within me, came and extended the first over several periods at one time, so that my soul, in which individual sensations usually left such a void, was filled with the general essence common to these two, there was no reason why I should not receive stimuli of that sort when among my fellow beings quite as well as in the solitude of nature since they come to us from chance happenings, aided, it is true, by the special stimulation on days when we venture outside the usual course of [illegible]

why it was precisely and exclusively sensations of this character which should point the way to a work of art, and for this purpose I was going to continue the chain of reasoning I had been following in the library, for I felt that the liberation of my spiritual life was now sufficiently advanced in me to be able to continue quite as well among the guests in the salon as alone in the library; it seemed to me that from this point of view, even in the midst of this large gathering, I would be able to maintain my solitude. For just as great events have no influence externally on our mental powers, so that a mediocre writer living in an epic period will remain just as mediocre, the real danger in social activity lay in the frivolous inclinations with which one went into it. But in itself it was no more able to make one mediocre than a heroic war could make a bad poet sublime. At any rate, whether it was theoretically desirable or not that a work of art be built up in this manner, until I could study this point, as I intended to do, I could not deny that, as far as I was concerned, when-

ever truly æsthetic impressions had come to me, it had always been as a result of sensations of this sort. It is true that they had been rather rare in my life, but they dominated it; I could discern in the past some of those mountain peaks which I had made the mistake of losing sight of—something I did not intend to do again. And already I could assert that, even though this trait might be peculiar to me by reason of the exclusive importance it assumed in my case, nevertheless I was reassured to discover that it bore a close resemblance to similar traits in other writers, less marked but recognisable. Was it not from sensations of the same sort as I received from the *madeleine* that the most beautiful part of the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* was derived? "[illegible] I was [illegible] perched [illegible] nt this magic sound evoked before my eyes the ancestral domain; the catastrophes I had just witnessed passed from my mind and I was transported rapidly into the past, where I saw once again that countryside where I so often heard the lark sing." And is not this one of the two or three most beautiful passages in these *Mémoires:* "A sweet and subtle fragrance of heliotrope exhaled from a small clump of scarlet runner in blossom; it was not brought to us by a breeze from our native land but by a savage wind from Newfoundland, bearing no relation to the exiled plant, devoid of any sympathy of remembrance or of voluptuous delight. In this perfume, not breathed of beauty, nor purified in its bosom, nor spread along its path, in this perfume, laden with dawn, with culture and with humankind, were all the melancholies of past regrets, of exile and of youth." One of the masterpieces of French literature, the *Sylvie* of Gérard de Nerval, like the *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* which tell of Combourg, contains a sensation of the same character as the savour of the *madeleine* or the "trilling of the lark." And finally, in Baudelaire, these reminiscences are still more frequent and obviously less incidental and therefore, in my opin-

ion, decisive. Here it is the poet himself who, with more variety and more indolence, purposely seeks in the odour of a woman's hair or her breast, for example, inspiring resemblances which shall evoke for him

L'azur du ciel immense et rond

and

Un port rempli de flammes et de mâts.

I was going to endeavour to recall the poems of Baudelaire which are based in similar manner on a transferred sensation, in order definitely to place myself again in line with such a noble literary heritage and thereby reassure myself that the work I was now about to undertake without any further hesitation was worth the effort I was going to devote to it, [illegible]
from the [illegible]
drawing-r[illegible]
strike me as very different from those I had formerly attended and to assume for me a very special character and a new meaning. What happened was that, the moment I entered the drawing-room, although I was holding firmly in mind the project I had just formed as far as I had worked it out, a *coup de théâtre* occurred which was destined to raise the gravest of objections against my undertaking, an objection which I would doubtless overcome but which, as I continued to reflect on the necessary conditions for accomplishing a work of art, was going to break in constantly upon my meditations by bringing before me a hundred times over the one consideration best calculated to cause me to hesitate. The first instant, I did not understand why I could not immediately recognise the master of the house and the guests, who seemed to have "made themselves up," usually with powdered hair, in a way that completely changed their appearance. The Prince, as he received his guests, still retained the genial manner of a fairyland king which ha[d] struck me in him the first time, but this day, having ap[-] parently submitted to the same etiquette as he had estab[-]

lished for his guests, he had rigged himself up with a white beard and what looked like leaden soles which made his feet drag heavily. He seemed to have taken it upon himself to represent one of the Seven Ages of Man. His mustachios were also white, as though with hoar-frost from the forest of Hop-o'-my-thumb. They made his mouth stiff and awkward and he should have removed them, once they had produced their effect. To tell the truth, I had to think hard to recognise him and I identified him only through the resemblance of certain features. As to that young Lezensac, I cannot imagine what he had put on his face but, while others had whitened, some one-half of their beards, others merely their moustaches, he had not bothered with dyes, but had managed to put wrinkles all over his face and add bristling hairs to his eyebrows. The general effect was not at all becoming; his face seemed hardened, bronzed, solemn-looking, and he appeared so old that no one would have taken him to be a young man I was greatly surprised at the same time when I heard someone address as the Duc de Châtellerault a little old man with the silvery moustache of an ambassador, who had retained just a glance of the eye which enabled me to recognise in him the young man I had once met calling on Mme. de Villeparisis. With the first person whom I thus succeeded in identifying by trying to disregard his masquerade and supplement by an effort of memory such features as had remained unchanged, my first idea should have been, and probably was for a fraction of a second, to congratulate him on being so wonderfully made up that one was not able at first to recognise him, just as when a great actor appears in a rôle very different from his natural self, the first moment he comes on the stage the audience, although fully informed through the program, sits for an instant open-mouthed with astonishment before breaking into applause. From this point of view the most remarkable of all was my personal enemy, M. d'Argencourt, the real "hit" of the entire affair. Not only had he disguised himself with an extraordinary beard of an impossible

whiteness in place of his own, scarcely touched with gray, but also, with the aid of many slight physical changes calculated to make a person look smaller and stouter and, what is more, change his outward character, his personality, this man, whose dignified mien and starchy stiffness I still remembered, had turned himself into an old beggar who no longer inspired the least respect, and he put so much realism into his character of a driveling old man that his limbs shook and the flaccid features of his usually haughty face smirked continually with a stupidly beatific expression. Carried to this point, a disguise becomes something more than that, a transformation. And in truth, although certain small details testified that it was indeed M. d'Argencourt who was offering this picturesque but indescribable spectacle, how many successive facial stages I had to reconstruct in order to get back to the M d'Argencourt I had known, who had changed himself so completely with merely his own physique to work with. He had evidently carried the travesty to the extreme limit possible without bursting; what had formerly been the haughtiest countenance and the most erect carriage was now merely a limp rag tossed hither and yon. Recalling an occasional smile that used sometimes to soften for an instant M. d'Argencourt's hauteur, one could just barely understand that there had been contained in the former very correct and proper gentleman the germ of the present smile of the senile old-clothes dealer. But even supposing that the intention to smile was the same as with M. d'Argencourt, the transformation of the entire face was so prodigious that the very substance of the eye which gave expression to the smile was totally altered and the smile became entirely different and seemed to belong to someone else. I burst into a laugh at the sight of this remarkable old dotard, as sottish in his friendly caricature of himself as was in a tragic sense M. de Charlus, paralysed and yet polite. M. d'Argencourt, in his incarnation of a comic moribund by a Regnard exaggerated by Labiche, was as approachable and affable as M. de Charlus in his King Lear rôle, painstakingly raising his

in acknowledgment of the greeting of the most insignificant person. Nevertheless, I had no intention of expressing to him my admiration of the remarkable exhibition he was furnishing. It was not my old dislike which held me back, for he had come to be so different from himself that I had the illusion of standing before another person, as kindly, well intentioned and harmless as the usual Argencourt was arrogant, hostile and dangerous. He was so much a different person, in fact, that, looking at this comic white individual, with his ineffable grimace, this little old snow man, resembling a General Dourakine in his second childhood, it seemed to me that the human being can undergo metamorphoses as complete as those of certain insects. I felt as if I were looking into the instructive show case of a natural history museum at the swift and certain evolution of the characteristics of an insect and, before this soft chrysalis, which did not move so much as it vibrated, I could not experience the feelings which M. d'Argencourt had always inspired in me. But I said nothing; I did not congratulate him on offering us a spectacle which seemed to extend still further the limits which the transformation of the human body can attain. In the wings of a theatre, it is true, or at a costume ball, one is inclined out of politeness rather to exaggerate the difficulty, almost to assert the impossibility, of recognising the disguised person. But here, on the contrary, an instinct had warned me that I should conceal this as much as possible, that there was nothing flattering in it, because the transformation was not intentional; and I came to realise something I had never dreamed of when I entered that drawing-room, namely, that every social gathering which one attends after a long absence from such affairs, provided there are present some, at least, of the persons one used to know, produces the effect of a masquerade fête of the most successful type of all, the one at which we are the most completely "puzzled" by the other guests, but one at which the strange faces they have been unintentionally developing for a long time cannot be removed with a little soap and water

after the affair is over. Puzzled by the other guests? Alas, we puzzle them quite as much, for the same difficulty I experienced in assigning the correct names to these faces seemed shared by all the people who looked at mine, paid no more attention to it than if they had never seen it, or tried to find in my present appearance some different recollection of the past.

When M. d'Argencourt put on this extraordinary "number," which for pure burlesque was unquestionably the most striking picture I would retain of him, it was like an actor who comes out on the stage for the last time before the curtain falls for good and all amid gales of laughter. If I no longer felt unfriendly toward him, it was because he had so recaptured the innocence of his earlier years that there was no longer any remembrance of the disparaging opinions he may have had of me, or of having seen M. de Charlus brusquely let go my arm, either because these feelings had entirely left him or because, to reach us, they had to pass [illegible]

[illegible] physical means of indicating that he was as malicious as ever or of restraining his irritating perpetual smile. It was an overstatement to compare him with an actor; relieved, as he was, of any conscious personality, he looked more like a jigging doll with a false beard of white wool as I saw him tossed about and moved up and down in this salon as though in a jointly scientific and philosophic Punch and Judy show, where he served, as in a funeral oration or a lecture at the Sorbonne, both as a reminder of the vanity of all things and as a natural-history specimen A Punch and Judy show in which one could identify the puppets as persons one knew only by reading on several planes at a time behind them, which gave them depth and necessitated a mental effort when you had these marionette-like old men before you, because you had to look at them both with the eyes and with the memory. A Punch and Judy show of puppets bathing

in the immaterial colours of past years, puppets personifying Time, which usually is not visible and searches for bodies in order to become so and, wherever he comes across them, seizes them to shew his magic lantern on them. As immaterial as Golo in the olden days on the door-handle of my room at Combray, in the same way the new and unrecognisable d'Argencourt stood there, like the revelation of Time, which he made partially visible. In the new elements which made up his face and his character, one read a certain number of years and recognised the symbolic figure of life, not as it appears to us, that is to say, permanent, but real, an atmosphere so variable that in the evening the proud gentleman of noble birth makes a caricature of himself as a second-hand-clothes dealer.

In other persons, moreover, these changes, these veritable alienations of personality, seemed to pass beyond the domain of natural history and one was surprised on hearing a name to note that the same person could present, not like M. d'Argencourt, the characteristics of a new and different species, but the external features of a different person. As in the case of M. d'Argencourt, time had achieved unsuspected possibilities with a certain young girl, for example, but these possibilities, although entirely of the face and body, appeared to bear some relation to her character. If the facial features change and produce a different combined effect, if they usually contract more slowly, they derive a new significance from their altered appearance. Thus, for example, there was a certain woman, formerly known as a lean, shallow-minded person, whose cheeks, now so much fuller as to be unrecognisable, and her nose, with its unexpected aquiline shape, caused surprise, often the same pleasant surprise as some profound, sensitive remark or some noble, courageous act one would never have expected from her. This nose, this new nose of hers, opened up horizons of possibilities one would never have dared hope for. Kindness and tender affection, formerly out of the question, became possible with those cheeks. One could make clear to a person with that

chin things one would never have thought of attempting with the possessor of the previous one. All these new facial traits carried the implication of fresh traits of character; the lean, scrawny young girl had become a portly, indulgent dowager. One could affirm that, not in the zoological sense, as with M. d'Argencourt, but in a social and moral sense it was a different person.

From all these aspects, an affair like the one I was attending was something far more precious than a picture of the past; it offered me, as it were, all the successive pictures separating the past from the present, which I had never seen, and, better yet, the relationship of the past to the present. It resembled what used to be called "an optical view," but of the years, the view not of a monument but of a person placed [illegible] of Time [illegible] been, sh[illegible] *nt the length of time which had passed*, that is to say, her face was not unduly disintegrated for a person who is being completely changed during her long passage through the abyss into which she has been plunged, the direction of which cannot be described except with equally empty comparisons because we can borrow them only from the world of space and, whether we apply them to height, length or depth, the only result is to make us realise that this other inconceivable and perceptible dimension does exist. The necessity of running back over the long course of the years in order to recall the names for these faces obliged me then, by reaction, to reconstitute the years I had not been conscious of and give them their true place. From this point of view, in order not to let myself be deceived by the apparent identity of space, the entirely altered appearance of an individual—M. d'Argencourt, for example—was a striking revelation of the reality of the calendar year (which usually remains an abstraction for us) just as the sight of certain dwarf trees or of giant baobabs is a sign to us of a change of latitude. So life appears to us like the fairy play in which, from act

act, one sees the baby become an adolescent, then a grown man and finally bend over toward the grave. And as one realises that it is through continuous changes that these individuals, observed at rather long intervals, have become so different, one realises that one has been subject to the same law as these creatures who have been so completely transformed that they no longer bear any resemblance to what we formerly saw of them, albeit—indeed, just because—they have not ceased to be themselves.

A young woman I had once known, now white-haired and shrunken into a malevolent little old woman, seemed to prove [illegible]

[illegible] on his young face. The patches of snow-white beards, which had formerly been black, gave a melancholy air to the human landscape of this reception, like the first yellow leaves on the trees when one was thinking one could still count on a long summer and, before having made the most of it, one sees that autumn is already here. Then it was that I, who from my early childhood had lived along from day to day with an unchanging conception of myself and others, for the first time, from the metamorphoses which had taken place in [illegible]

[illegible] desperately sad as an announcement of the approach of my own. This latter was further proclaimed to me time after time by remarks which every few minutes struck my ears like the trumpets of the Judgment Day. The first one came from the Duchesse de Guermantes, whom I had just noticed walking between a double row of staring folk who, unconscious of the miraculous artifices of toilette and æsthetics which were being used on them and impressed by the tawny head of hair and the salmon-pink body barely emerging from

its fins of black lace and wrapped round with strands of jewels, gazed upon the inherited sinuousness of its lines as they might have looked upon some ancient sacred fish, laden with precious stones, in which was incarnated the tutelary genius of the Guermantes family. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "what a joy to see you, my oldest friend!" And, while my pride as a young man at Combray, when I had never for an instant thought it possible I might be one of her friends and actually participate in the mysterious real life of the Guermantes—be one of her friends on the same footing as M de Bréauté, M. de Forestelle, Swann and all the others now dead—might have been flattered by this, now it made me very unhappy. "Her oldest friend!" I said to myself. "She is exaggerating. One of the oldest, perhaps. But am I, then . . ." At this minute, one of the Prince's nephews came up to me and said, "As an old Parisian, you . . ." A moment later, a note was handed me. On arriving, I had met a young Létourville who knew me slightly but whose exact relationship to the Duchess I had forgotten. He had just graduated from Saint-Cyr and, with the idea that he might be an agreeable companion for me as Saint-Loup had been and might give me inside information on army matters, with all the changes that had taken place, I had promised to rejoin him in a little while and we would arrange to have dinner together, for which he had thanked me warmly. But I had stopped too long to muse in the library and the note he had left for me was to say that he was unable to wait any longer, and to give me his address. The letter from this hoped-for companion ended in this manner: "Most respectfully, Your young friend, Létourville." "Young friend!" That was the way I used in former years to write to men who were thirty years older than I, to Legrandin, for example. What! this second lieutenant, whom I had visioned as a companion like Saint-Loup, called himself my "young friend"! Then something more than military tactics had changed during these years and to M. de Létourville I was, therefore, not a comrade but an old gentleman and,

instead of being a suitable companion for him, as I had imagined myself to be, I was separated from him by the spread of invisible compasses which I had never dreamed of and which removed me so far away from the young second lieutenant that evidently, since he called himself my "young friend," I was an old man to him.

Almost immediately thereafter someone mentioned Bloch and I inquired whether they meant the young man or his father, not knowing that the latter had died during the war from the shock, it was said, of seeing France invaded. "I didn't know he had any children," replied the Duchess. "I didn't know he was married. But it's obviously the father we're talki[illegible] young man about him, [illegible] is old enough to have [illegible] that it was my friend they were talking of. Moreover, he came in himself a moment later. I scarcely recognised him. And besides, he had now adopted, not just a pseudonym but the entire name of Jacques du Rozier, beneath which it would have required my grandfather's keen nose to detect the sweet-smelling valley of Hebron and the chains of Israel, which my friend seemed to have cast off for good and all. And indeed, a stylish English air had completely transformed his face, planing down all that could be removed. His hair, formerly curly, was brushed flat and parted in the middle, and glistened with pomade. His nose had remained large and red but now seemed rather to be swollen with a kind of chronic cold, which might account for the nasal tone with which he indolently uttered his remarks for, at the same time that he had adopted a way of arranging his hair suited to [illegible] voice suited to his enunciation [illegible] way of speaking an air of [illegible] .e inflamed nostrils. And thanks to his way of arranging his hair, the removal of his moustache, the smartness of his manner and his strong determination, that Jewish nose disappeared the way a well gotten-up hunchback can conceal his deformity. But the

instant one saw him, a most striking change in the significance of his physiognomy was produced by a formidable monocle. The mechanical touch which this gave relieved his face of all the difficult duties usually imposed on a human countenance, such as looking handsome, expressing wit, kindliness, resolution. The mere presence of this monocle made it unnecessary, in the first place, to make up one's mind whether he was good-looking or not, just as when one is shewn in a store articles imported from England and the salesman says they are the latest style, one does not dare consider whether one likes them or not. In addition he installed himself behind the glass of that monocle in as haughty, smug and distant a posture as if it had been the window of a luxurious brougham, and in order to make his face harmonise with his hair and his monocle, his features had become entirely expressionless. Over his face I saw in imagination that sickly and garrulous expression, that feeble nodding of the head which so quickly comes to a stop and in which I would have recognised the erudite weariness of amiable old men if I had not, after all, recognised my friend standing before me and if my recollections had not animated him with that erstwhile incessant youthful gaiety which he seemed now to have gotten rid of. For me, who had known him at th[illegible] a youth [illegible] sciously [illegible] not grown any older since that time. I heard someone say that he looked his age and I was astonished to note on his face some of the signs that are characteristic rather of old men. I then understood that it was because he really was old and that it is out of young men who last long enough that life makes its old men.

As someone, hearing that I was not well, asked if I was not afraid of catching the grippe, which was prevalent at that time, another well meaning person reassured me with the remark, "No, it is more likely to attack people who are still young; people who have reached your age don't run n[illegible]

risk." And they assured me that the servants of the house had recognised me readily. They had whispered my name to one another and "in their language," one lady told how she had heard them say, "There's Papa ——," mentioning my name. (Since I had no children, the appellation could allude only to my age.)

[illegible] say, "What! did I [illegible] ch more prominent [illegible] de Périgord, Monsignor Dupanloup," I naively felt regret that I had not known these persons, whom she termed "a bit of the old régime." I should have stopped to think that people call "old régime" whatever they knew only toward its close. In much the same way whatever we see on the horizon assumes a mysterious size and seems to mark the boundary of a world we shall never see again; meanwhile we move forward and soon we ourselves are on the horizon from the point of view of the generations advancing behind us, but in the meantime the horizon has receded and the world that seemed to have come to its end continues to unroll before us. "I even had the good fortune to see the Duchesse de Dino when I was a young girl," Mme. de Guermantes added. "Good Lord! I'm not twenty-five any longer, you know." This last remark annoyed me. She should not have said that; it would be all right for an old woman. "As for you," she went on, "you're always the same; you have hardly changed at all." And that hurt me almost more than if she had mentioned some change in me for it proved that much time had passed, since it was surprising that there was so little change. "My friend," she said, "you are a wonder, the way you retain your youthful looks"—a dismal commentary because it has no meaning unless we have become old in fact, if not in appearance. And she dealt me the final blow when she added, "I was always sorry you never married. But after all, maybe it's just as well you didn't. You would have been old enough to have sons in the war and if they had been killed, like poor Robert de Saint-Loup (I still think of him often)

with your sensitive nature you would not have survived them." And I saw myself, as though in the first truthful mirror I had found, through the eyes of old folk who thought they had remained young (just as I believed I had myself) and who, when I pointed to myself as an example of an old man, hoping they would contradict me, shewed no look of protest in their eyes, which saw me as they did not see themselves but as I saw them. For we did not see ourselves or our own ages
as accurately
them. And r
had grown old, would not have been as sad as I. But in the first place, it is the same with old age as with death—some people face both with indifference, not because they have more courage than the others but because they have more imagination. Then, too, a man who from childhood has had but one idea in mind but has been obliged by indolence and also by ill health continually to postpone the carrying out of that idea and to mark off each evening the day that had slipped away and was gone forever—so that the same malady which hastens the ageing of his body retards the maturing of his mind—is more surprised and shocked to discover that he has never ceased living in Time than a man who lives little within himself, governs himself by the calendar and does not all at once come upon the total of the years because he has been adding them up day by day. But a still graver reason explained my distress; I was discovering this destructive action of Time at the very moment when I was about to undertake to make clear and to intellectualise in a literary work some realities that had no relation whatsoever to Time.

In some of the guests, the replacing of each cell by others, gradual, it is true, but effected during my absence, had brought about such a complete change, such an entire metamorphosis, that I could have dined opposite them in a restaurant a hundred times without any more suspecting that I had once known them than I could have guessed the

royal rank of a sovereign travelling incognito or the secret vice of some total stranger. And this comparison is inadequate even in the cases where I heard the guests' names, for you can conceive that a stranger seated opposite you may be a criminal or a king, whereas I had known these people—or, rather, I had known people of the same name but so different that I could not believe they were the same. However, just as I would have done in the case of the stranger if I had started out with the assumption of royalty (or vice) which very quickly detects in his features something distinguished (or suspicious)—whereas, with one's eyes bandaged, it would have been so easy to commit the blunder of being disrespectful (or friendly)—I made a determined effort to apply to the face of an entirely unknown woman the idea that she was Mme. Sazerat, and ultimately I reconstituted the old familiar significance of her face, which would have remained utterly strange to me, wholly that of another woman who had lost all the human attributes familiar to me as fully as would a man who turned into a monkey, if her name and the assertion of her identity had not put me on the track of the sc[illegible] nature of the problem. [illegible]ck so clearly that [illegible]le; and like a witness brought to identify an accused person, [illegible]he difference was so great that I was forced to say, "No, I don't recognise him."

A young woman said to me, "Shall we two go and dine together in some restaurant?" As I replied, "Very well, unless you think it might compromise you to be seen dining alone with a young man," I heard everyone around me laugh and I hastened to add, "or, I should say, with an old one." I realised that the remark that had made them laugh was one that my mother, to whom I was always a child, might have made in speaking of me. From which I noticed that, when I wished to form an opinion of myself, I took the same point of view as she. Though in the long run I noted, as she used to do, certain changes that had occurred since my early

childhood, they were changes which had taken place a long time before. I had stopped at the one which had once caused someone to say, almost before it was a fact, "He is almost a young man now." I still thought this but now it was very much out of date. I was not aware how much I had changed. But after all, how did they come to notice it, those people who had burst out laughing? I did not have a single grey hair; my moustache was entirely black I should have liked to be able to ask them what revealed the evidence of the terrible thing And now I understood what old age was—old age which, of all the realities, is perhaps the one concerning which we retain for the longest time a purely abstract conception, looking at the calendars, dating our letters, watching our friends get married and our friends' children, without understanding, whether through fear or indolence, what it all means, until the day we catch sight of a strange silhouette, such as M. d'Argencourt's, which opens our eyes to the fact that we are now living in a different world; or until the day when the grandson of one of our friends, a young man whom we would instinctively treat as a comrade, smiled as if we were poking fun at him, because we seemed like a grandfather to him; I grasped the meaning of death and love, of intellectual pleasures, the value of sorrow or of a vocation. For even if names had lost their meaning for me, words disclosed to me their full significance. The beauty of an image is to be found behind the object—that of an idea, in front of it. So that the beauty of the former ceases to enrapture us when we have arrived at the object itself, but we do not understand the beauty of the latter until we have gone beyond the object.

And so the cruel discovery I had just made with regard to the passage of Time could not fail to combine with all these other ideas and be of value to me in connection with the core and substance of my book. Since I had decided that it could not be composed exclusively of genuinely complete impressions, namely, those that have no relation to Time, among the truths with which I planned to surround them,

... . . .' 'hose which relate to Time, and nations are engulfed ge place. I would not be wholly preoccupied with considering those changes which occur in the outward aspect of human beings, of which I was getting fresh examples every minute—for even while meditating on my literary work, now so definitively launched that it could not be stopped by passing distractions, I continued to greet the people I knew and chat with them for a while. The advancing years, let me add, did not shew on all of them in the same manner. I noticed someone who was inquiring as to my name; I was told it was M. de Cambremer. And then, to shew that he had recognised me, he asked, "Do you still have those asthmatic attacks?" On my replying in the affirmative, he remarked, "You see, that does not prevent a person from living to a ripe old age," as if I were fully a hundred years old. As I talked with him, I could not take my eyes off two or three of his features which I was able in thought to fit into that synthesis of my past recollections—very different in every other respect—which I called his personal appearance. But once he turned his head sideways and then I saw that what had so completely changed his looks was the development of huge red pouches on his cheeks, which hindered him from opening freely his mouth or his eyes, with the result that I stood there stupefied, not daring to look at those carbuncles, so to speak, which it seemed to me more proper he should mention first. But he laughed and made no reference to it, like a plucky invalid, and so I was afraid I might seem callous if I did not ask about it, or tactless if I did. "But they come less frequently as you get older, don't they?" he asked, still talkin about my asthmatic attacks. I replied in the negative "Oh yes, they do; my sister has them noticeably less ofte than she used to," he insisted in a contradictory tone, as if i had to be the same for me as for his sister and as if old ag were one of those remedies which he could not conceiv should fail to benefit me when they had helped Mme. d

Gaucourt. When Mme. de Cambremer-Legrandin joined us, I was more and more afraid of seeming unsympathetic if I did not express regret at what I noticed on her husband's face and yet I did not dare to be the first to mention it. "You're glad to see him?" she asked me. "Is he in good health?" I replied, with a doubtful air. "You can see for yourself," she answered. She was not even aware of this affliction, which it was so painful for me to look at and which was nothing else than one of the masks that Time had applied to the Marquis's face, but little by little, making it heavier so gradually that the Marquise had not noticed the transformation. When M de Cambremer had finished asking me about my asthmatic attacks, I had an opportunity to inquire of someone in a low voice whether the Marquis's mother was still alive. She was. In grasping the idea of the passage of time, the first step is the hardest. One finds it difficult at first to realise that so much time has gone by and then that even more time has not passed. You had never imagined that the thirteenth century was so far back and then you find it hard to believe that there are some churches of that period still in existence, although they are very numerous in France. There had taken place in me in a few minutes the same process as goes on more slowly in people who first have trouble believing that someone they knew when young is now sixty years old; then, fifteen years later, they cannot believe that he is still living and is only seventy-five years old. I asked M. de Cambremer how his mother was "As wonderful as ever," he replied, using an adjective which in certain families, in contrast to tribes where the aged relatives are treated mercilessly, is applied to the old folk, whose retention of some of their more purely physical faculties, such as hearing well, walking to church, bearing with stolidity the loss of friends and relatives, seems to their children to have about it some remarkable moral beauty.

While some of the women admitted their age by resorting to cosmetics, it was, on the other hand, the absence of "make-up" which disclosed the approach of old age in the

case of some men on whose faces I had never specially noticed it, but who nevertheless now appeared greatly changed since they had given up trying to look well and had stopped using it. Among these was Legrandin. Doing away with the pink of his lips and cheeks, which I had never suspected was artificial, gave to his face the greyish tinge, and to his sharper, now dismal features the carved and chiseled precision, of an Egyptian god. A god? Say rather, a ghost. He had lost all heart, not only to use paint on his face but even to smile, to keep a sparkle in his eye or make clever remarks. It was startling to see him so pale, so downhearted, uttering only a few words, as meaningless as those spoken by spirits called back from beyond the grave. One wondered what it was that prevented him from being vivacious, talkative, charming, just as one does on seeing

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sorry phantom of himself. In the case of some men, their hair had not even started to turn white. That was why I recognised the old valet of the Prince de Guermantes when he came to say a word to his master. The bristling hair that stood out on his cheeks, as well as on the top of his head, was still of a reddish hue, verging on pink, and yet he could not be suspected of dyeing his hair, like the Duchesse de Guermantes. But, for all that, he seemed old. One merely realised that there are some types of men who are like some species of the vegetable kingdom, mosses, lichens and many others, which do not change with the approach of winter.

In other guests, whose faces were still unmarred, age shewed itself in other ways; they seemed a little awkward when they had to take a few steps; at first one thought they had some trouble with their legs; but after a while one came to realise that old age had given them leaden feet. Some had improved with age, like the Prince d'Agrigente. The

tall, slender man, with lustreless eyes, and hair that seemed destined to remain forever reddish, had been replaced, through a metamorphosis like that of insects, by an old man with white hair in place of the red, which had been on exhibition too long, like a tablecloth that has been used too much. His chest had acquired a strangely robust, almost warrior-like corpulence and must have occasioned a veritable bursting of the slender chrysalis I had formerly known, a conscious gravity, tempered with a new kindliness toward everyone, shone in his eyes. And since in spite of everything a certain resemblance persisted between the vigorous prince of the present and the portrait of his former self in my memory, I marvelled at the power of complete reconstruction possessed by Time which, while respecting the unity of the individual and the laws of life, is able to change the setting in this way and introduce daring contrasts between two successive aspects of one and the same person, for many of these people I was able to identify at once, although they were like rather poor portraits of themselves, brought together in an exhibition where an inaccurate and mean-spirited artist had hardened the features of one, taken away the fresh complexion of another and her slender waist and flashing eyes. Comparing these images with those I had in my "mind's eye," I preferred the earlier ones. Just as often we dislike and refuse one photograph among several that a friend has asked us to choose from To each person, as I looked at the picture of himself that he offered me, I would have liked to say, "No, not this one; you're not as good-looking, it isn't you." I would not have dared to add, "Instead of your handsome straight nose, they have given you your father's hooked nose, which I never saw on you before." The fact is, it was a new, ancestral nose. In short, the artist Time had turned out all these models in such a way that they were recognisable but not good likenesses, not because he had flattered them, but because he had made them look older. That artist, moreover, works very slowly. Thus, for instance, that replica of Odette's face, a suggestion

of which I had seen barely sketched in Gilberte's face the day I first saw Bergotte, had finally been developed by Time to the point of the most perfect likeness (as will be shewn a little later) much as a painter keeps a piece of work on hand for many years, adding to it from time to time. In several guests I finally recognised, not merely the individual but the person I had formerly known—Ski, for example, as little altered as a flower or a fruit that has dried, one of those connoisseurs, "celibates of art," who go through life useless and unsatisfied. Ski had thus remained like an embryonic attempt, confirming my theories on art. Others followed him who were not in any way connoisseurs of art, society people who took an interest in nothing, and they, too, had not been ripened by age but their still rosy-cheeked faces retained the cheerful expression of their early youth, even though bordered with the first fringe of wrinkles and crowned with a wreath of white hair. They were not old folk but young people of eighteen, very much faded. It would have taken very little to remove these stigmata of life, and death would be able to restore their youthful appearance with no more effort than is required to remove from a portrait the thin layer of dirt which alone dims its oldtime brilliance. And I thought also of the [illegible] hear some [illegible] vance that [illegible] lised that, forty years before, he had been a terrible young man, with a vanity, duplicity, arrogance and trickery which there is no reason to suppose he has lost.

And yet, in marked contrast with these latter, I had the pleasant surprise of talking with men and women who used to be unbearable but who had lost almost all their bad qualities, life having either reduced their self-assurance by thwarting their aims or lessened their bitterness by fulfilling their desires. A wealthy marriage, which made it no longer necessary to strive or to keep up a display, even the wife's influence, a slowly acquired appreciation of values different from those in which a frivolous youth believes exclusively, had

made it possible for them to relax their characters and shew their good qualities. As they grew older, they seemed to take on a different personality, like those trees which, by changing their colour in the autumn, seem to change their very nature. In their case the personality of their later years shewed itself clearly but as something spiritual which they had not possessed before. In others it was more physical and so new that the person—Mme. de Souvré, for example—seemed to me at the same time unknown and yet known—unknown because it was impossible for me to suspect that it was she and, in spite of myself, as I returned her greeting, I could not conceal the mental effort which made me hesitate as to which of three or four persons (of whom Mme. de Souvré was not one) I was shaking hands with—and with a friendliness, by the way, which must have surprised her, for in my doubt, afraid of being too cool if it turned out to be some close friend, I made up for the uncertainty in my glance by the warmth of my handshake and my smile. But on the other hand, her new appearance was not unfamiliar to me. It was the same as I had often seen in the course of my life on stout, elderly women but without suspecting then that it was possible they had looked like Mme de Souvré many years earlier. Her appearance now was so different from what I had known in the past that one might have taken her for a character in a fairy play, condemned to appear first as a young girl, then as a sturdy matron and soon to come on again, no doubt, as a bent and palsied old woman. Like some tired swimmer who sees the shore afar off, she seemed barely able to push back the waves of time that were submerging her. By close study of her doubtful face, uncertain as an untrustworthy memory that can no longer retain the outlines of former years, I succeeded, however, in bringing to light something of the original by indulging in a little game of eliminating the squares and hexagons which age had added to her cheeks. I should state, however, that it was not always geometrical figures that age added to the women's faces. In the Duchesse de

Guermantes' cheeks, albeit so little altered, and yet now as composite as nougat, I was able to discern a trace of verdigris, a bit of pulverised pink shell, a swelling hard to describe, smaller than a mistletoe berry and less transparent than a glass bead.

Some men limped, but one realised that it was not the result of a carriage accident, but of a stroke and because they already had one foot in the grave, as the saying is. Some women, such as Mme. de Franquetot, half paralysed, seemed unable quite to disengage their dress, caught on the stonework of their tomb, and they could not straighten up, bent over as they were, with their heads inclined, in a stooping posture that suggested their present situation, tottering between life and death until they should make the final plunge. Nothing could withstand the movement of this parabolic curve which was carrying them off and, if they tried to stand up, immediately they trembled and their hands could not hold anything.

Other faces under the cowl of their white hair already had the rigidity and the sealed eyelids of those who are about to die, and their lips, moved by a perpetual quivering, seemed to be mumbling the prayer of those *in extremis*.

White hair in place of black or blond was sufficient to alter completely a face whose lines had remained the same. Theatrical costumers know that a powdered wig is enough to disguise anyone adequately and make him unrecognisable. The young Marquis de Beausergent, whom I had seen in Mme. de Cambremer's box, when he was only a second lieutenant, the day Mme. de Guermantes was in her cousin' box, still had the same features, as perfectly regular as ever even more so, as the physiological rigidity of arteriosclerosi still further accentuated the impassive fixity of his physiognomy of a dandy and gave his features the excessive sharpness—so immobile that it amounted almost to a grimace—which they would have had in a study by Mantegna o Michelangelo. His complexion, formerly of a racy red, wa now of a solemn pallour; some grey hairs, a slight tendenc

to stoutness, the stately carriage of a doge, a weariness that amounted to a constant desire to sleep, all of this combined in him to give an unwonted air of fatal majesty. The rectangle of his blond beard was now replaced by an equal rectangle of white so perfectly that, noticing that this second lieutenant I had known now had five bars, my first impulse was to congratulate him, not on having been promoted to be a colonel but on looking so well when dressed up as a colonel, for which disguise he seemed to have borrowed from his father the latter's uniform and sad and solemn air of a superior officer. Another man's blond beard had likewise given way to a white one, but, his face having remained young, alert and smiling, the white beard only made him appear more ruddy [illegible] eyes and giving [illegible] youth the inspire[illegible] that white hair and other details had effected, especially in the women, would have held my attention less forcibly if they had constituted simply a change in colour, which can charm the eye, and not also a change in personality, which is disturbing to the mind. And in truth, to "recognise" someone and, more especially, to work out his identity after not having been able to recognise him, means conceiving two contradictory things under the same denomination; it means admitting that what used to be here, the person we remember, no longer exists, while the one that is here we did not know; it means having to penetrate a mystery almost as disturbing as death, of which it is, as it were, the preface and the forerunner. For I knew what these changes meant, what they were the prelude to. Therefore this whiteness of the hair was very impressive in the women, combined with so many other changes. A name was mentioned to me and I was stupefied to think that it designated both the blond woman at the dance whom I had once known and the thickset lady in white hair who was walking heavily past me. Together with a certain high colour, that name was, perhaps, the only thing in common between the two women, the one

in my memory and the one at the Guermantes reception, more different from one another than the *ingénue* and the dowager in a play. For life to have succeeded in giving to the former dancer this enormous body, and to have been able, as with a metronome, to slow down her ungainly movements, and finally to have substituted this pot-bellied old drum major for the slender blond, with perhaps not a single particle unchanged except the cheeks—fuller, it is true, but even in her youth they were already blotched with red—more demolition and reconstruction had been necessary than for putting a dome in the place of a spire; and when one stopped to reflect that this operation had been performed, not on inert matter but on flesh, which changes only imperceptibly, the startling contrast between the present spectacle and the person I remembered pushed the latter back into a past more than remote, almost incredible. It was difficult to connect the two appearances, to conceive the two persons under one and the same denomination, for in the same way as it is hard to imagine that a dead person was once alive or that one who was alive yesterday is dead today, it presents a difficulty almost as great and of much the same sort (for the dissolution of youthfulness, the destruction of an individual full of strength and agility is already a preliminary annihilation) to imagine that the woman who once was young is now old, when the appearance of the old woman, put beside that of the young one, seems to make this so impossible that first it is the old one, then the young one, then the old one again who seems to be only a dream, and one would never believe that the latter could once have been the former, or that the original substance of her did not take refuge somewhere else but, under the skilful manipulation of Time, has become what we now see before us, that it is the same substance and has never left the same body—if we did not have the proof of this in the identity of the names and the supporting testimony of friends, with nothing to add an appearance of probability except the red blotches, formerly hidden among her golden strands but now displayed

widely under her snow-white hair. It was disquieting to think of the long periods of time that must have passed away before the completion of such a revolution in the geology of a face and to note the erosions that had occurred along the nose and the immense alluvial deposits beside the cheeks, surrounding the entire face with their opaque and refractory mass. I had, it is true, always regarded our individual self at any given moment as a sort of polypary, in which the eye, an independent but related organism, winks if a bit of dust comes along, without being directed by the intelligence; or, rather, in which the intestine, like a hidden parasite, gets infected without the intelligence knowing it; but also (and similarly as to the soul throughout our lifetime) as a series of selves, juxtaposed but distinct, which would successively die or even alternate for one another, like those which used to take one another's place within me in Combray as night came on.

Bu [illegible] moral cells which make up a [illegible] I had seen [illegible] eappear in Saint-Loup, together with the strange, occasional defects of his own character, like the Semitism in Swann. I could see it also in Bloch. Since he had lost his father, the idea that the latter was a man head and shoulders above all the rest, added to the strong family feeling often to be found in Jewish households, had caused his love for his parent to assume the form of a religious cult. He had been unable to bear the idea that his father was gone, and had had to shut himself up in a sanitarium for nearly a year. He had acknowledged my expression of sympathy in a tone shewing deep emotion and at the same time almost condescending, so privileged did he consider me to have been admitted to the presence of that superior person, whose two-horse carriage he would have been glad to present to some historical museum. And now, at his family table (for, contrary to what the Duchesse de Guermantes believed, he was married) the same anger that his father had felt against M. Nissi-

Bernard he felt against his own father-in-law. He indulged in similar outbursts against him. Just as, in listening to Cottard, Brichot and many others, I had come to realise that, through common culture and fashionable fads, a simple undulation sends the same mannerisms of speech and thought over the surface of the globe, in the same way over the whole expanse of time great tidal waves bring up from the depths of the ages the same hatreds, the same sorrows, the same types of bravery, the same strange fancies running through superposed generations, each section made at various levels in the same series giving a repetition (like shadows cast on a row of screens) of a phenomenon as identically reproduced, although often not as trivial, as the family trait which set M. Bloch junior at odds with his father-in-law, M. Bloch senior with M. Nissim Bernard, and others before them whom I had never known.

There were men whom I knew to be related to other men without my ever having found that they had a single trait in common; admiring the white-haired old hermit that Legrandin had become, I suddenly noticed—I might say, discovered with the satisfaction of a zoologist—in the flatness of his cheeks the same formation as in those of his young nephew, Léonor de Cambremer who, however, did not seem to resemble him at all; to this first peculiarity which they possessed in common I added another which I had not previously observed in Léonor de Cambremer, then others which were not to be found in my customary recollection of his youthful appearance, so that I soon had of him as it were a caricature, more truthful and penetrating than if it had been a perfect likeness; his uncle now appeared to me as young Cambremer who had amused himself by assuming the appearance of the old man he would, in fact, be some day. Thus it was not merely the transformations which had occurred in the young people of yesterday, but also those to come in the young people of to-day, which were conveying the sensation of Time to me with such telling effect.

The women tried to retain something of the most distinc-

tive element of their charm, but often the new material in *their* faces no longer lent itself to this. Most of them, having lost the features which had borne the imprint of beauty, at least—if not of youth—had then tried to find a way to construct another beauty with their present set of features. Displacing, if not the center of gravity, at any rate the center of perspective of their face and arranging the features around that so as to conform to a new type, they began at the age of fifty a new sort of beauty, just as some people take up a new profession late in life, or very much as a piece of land that is no longer any good for grape-growing is made to produce beets Around these new features, they made a new youthfulness blossom forth. The only women who could not take advantage of these transformations were those who were *either* too handsome or too homely. The former, as though pieces of marble sculpture the finished lines of which could not now be changed in any way, were crumbling away, bit by bit, like statues The others, those who had some facial deformity, had certain advantages even over the handsome women In the first place they were the only ones who were recognised immediately. One knew that there were not two mouths alike in Paris, and theirs enabled me to recognise them at this reception where I had been unable to recognise anyone at all. In the second place, those women did not even appear to have aged. Old age is a human thing. They were monsters and did not seem to have changed any more than whales. And there were other men and women who likewise did not appear to have grown any older; their figures were as slender and their faces as young as ever. But if, in order to talk with them, I approached very close to the face, with its smooth skin and fine outlines, it then looked quite different, as happens with the outer surface of a vegetable or a drop of water or blood when placed under the microscope. Then I discerned a multitude of fatty splotches under the skin that I had thought so smooth, but which now sickened me. Nor did the lines of the face withstand this enlargement any better. When viewed at close

range, the line of the nose was interrupted and weakened and the same oily spots were here as on the rest of the face, while the eyes were seen to be sunken behind pouches that destroyed the likeness which I thought I had discovered between this face and the one of former days. Consequently, as far as those guests were concerned, they were young if seen from a distance but their age increased with the magnifying of the face and the possibility of examining its various surfaces. In other words, with them old age was dependent on the person looking at them; he had to assume the right position if he wished to see their faces remain young and had to cast on them only those distant glances which make the object look smaller, without using the lenses an optician selects for a far-sighted person; with them old age, as readily detected as infusoria in a drop of water, drew nearer, not with the progress of the years but in proportion as the vision of the observer moved along the scale of enlargement.

In general, the degree of whiteness of the hair was like an indication of the extent of time the person had lived, like those mountain summits which, although appearing to the eye to be on a line with other peaks, nevertheless reveal the scale of their altitude by the brilliancy of their snowy whiteness. But that was not always dependable, especially with the women. Thus, the Princesse de Guermantes' locks which, when they were a silky, glossy grey, had looked like a wreath of silver above her prominent forehead, as they turned white, took on the dull tone of wool or tow and because of that seemed grey, like dirty snow that has lost its brilliance. And in many cases, flaxen-haired dancers had, along with a peruke of white hair, acquired something more than the friendship of duchesses they had not previously known. But, having done nothing but dance in their youth, art had touched them like divine grace and, just as in the seventeenth century illustrious ladies entered monastic orders, they dwelt in apartments filled with cubist pictures, living only for some cubist painter who produced solely for them.

As for the old men whose features had changed, they

nevertheless endeavoured to maintain, fixed and permanent, one of those fleeting expressions of countenance which one assumes for a second's pose, either to take full advantage of some outward excellence or to offset some defect; they looked as if they had become for all time immutable snapshots of themselves.

All these persons had taken so much *time* to put on their disguises that those who lived with them seldom were aware of the change. An extension of time was even granted them frequently during which they were permitted to remain themselves until rather late in life But then the deferred disguising went forward more rapidly; in any case, it was inevitable. I had never detected any resemblance between Mme. X and her mother, whom I had known only as an elderly woman, shrunken like a little old Turk, whereas the daughter was erect and charming when I knew her and she remained so for a very long time—too long, in fact, for, like someone who must not forget to put on again her Turkish costume before night comes, she had lost track of time and so in a hurry, almost over night, she had become shrunken and had faithfully reproduced her mother's resemblance to a little old Turkish woman.

I met there again one of my old friends whom I had been in the habit of seeing almost every day for ten years. Someone wished to introduce us again, so I went over to him and he said to me in a voice that I recognised perfectly, "This is a great pleasure to me after all these years." But what a surprise I had! The voice seemed to have been uttered by an improved phonograph for, though it was my friend's voice, it came from a stout, grey-haired fellow whom I did not know, and from then on it seemed to me that in some artificial way, by some mechanical trick, they must have installed my friend's voice inside this commonplace, fat old man. And yet I knew it was he; the person who had introduced us to one another after such a long lapse of time had nothing of the practical joker about him. He himself to[illegible] me I had not changed, from which I understood that I

thought he had not, either. Then I looked at him more closely. And in truth, except that he had grown so much stouter, he had retained much of his former self. Still I could not grasp the idea that it could be he. Then I tried to remember. When he was young, he had had blue eyes, always merry, always in motion, evidently in search of something I had not thought of but which must have been very impersonal, the truth, no doubt, pursued with perpetual uncertainty—and with all that, a sort of roguishness and a roving respect for all the friends of his family. But now, having become an influential politician, capable and dictatorial, those blue eyes of his—which, by the way, had not found what they were seeking—had become fixed, and this gave them a sharp expression, as though looking out from under a frowning eyebrow. And so his expression of gaiety and innocent abandon had changed to one of trickery and deceit. No, it certainly seemed to me that it was someone else, when suddenly, at something I said, I heard his laugh, his hearty laugh of former days, which used to go so well with the gay, perpetual restlessness of his eyes. Fanatical music lovers maintain that Z's music is entirely different when orchestrated by X. These are subtle shadings which ordinary folk cannot grasp, but the half-smothered hearty laugh of a child, under a piercing glance like a well sharpened pencil—even if a bit sidewise—this is more than a difference in orchestration. When the laugh stopped, I tried to recognise my friend but, like Ulysses in the *Odyssey* throwing himself on his mother's dead body or like a medium trying in vain to get from an apparition some reply that will identify it, or like the visitor at an electrical exhibition who cannot believe that the voice which comes back to him so perfectly from the phonograph has not, just the same, been spontaneously uttered by someone else, I was no longer able to recognise my friend.

I must, however, make this qualification, that it is possible in the case of some people for the time beats to be accelerated or retarded. I had happened to meet in the street, four

or five years before, the Vicomtesse de St.-Fiacre, daughter-in-law of the Guermantes' friend. Her statuesque features seemed to assure her eternal youth. And, besides, she was still young. But now, despite her smiles and her greeting, I could not recognise her in a lady whose features were so chipped away that the lines of her face could no longer be reconstructed. What had happened was that she had been taking cocaine and other drugs for three years past. Her eyes, circled with deep black rings, wore almost a haunted look. Her mouth had a peculiar sneer. She had gotten up specially for that reception, I was told, but spent months without leaving her bed or her *chaise longue*. Time has in this way express trains and special trains to carry people to a premature old age. But on the other track return trains run almost as swiftly. I mistook M. de Courgivaux for his son, for he looked younger than ever (he must have been past fifty, but seemed under thirty). He had found an intelligent doctor and had given up alcohol and salt; he had become thirty years old again and that day looked even younger because he had had his hair cut that very morning.

It was a curious thing how the phenomenon of old age, in the various forms it assumed, appeared to take into account certain social habits. Men who, although of aristocratic birth, had always gone around dressed in the plainest alpaca suits and old straw hats that even a shopkeeper would not have been willing to wear had aged in just the same way as the gardeners and farmers among whom they had lived. Brown spots had developed on their cheeks and their faces had turned yellow and dark, like the pages of an old book.

And I thought also of all those who were not present because they were unable to come, but whose secretaries tried to create the illusion of their survival by means of the telegrams that were being delivered to the Princess every now and then—sick folk who have been dying for years, who do not get up any more or move a muscle and who, even surrounded by the shallow solicitude of visitors drawn

there by tourist curiosity or the trusting faith of pilgrims, lie with closed eyes, rosary in hand, turning back partly the already shroud-like sheet and looking like a reclining person whom some disease has chiseled down to a skeleton of rigid flesh, white as marble, stretched out on his tomb.

Some women, it is true, were still easily recognisable; their countenances had remained almost unchanged and they had merely, as though in harmonious agreement with the season, adopted grey hair as their personal adornment for the autumn. But in the case of other women, and some men as well, the transformation was so complete and their identity so impossible to establish—for example the identity of a man whom I remembered as a dark-haired libertine and the old monk now before me—that it was the art of certain marvellous mimes (of whom Fregoli remains the perfect type) rather than the art of the actor, which these fabulous transformations called to mind. A desire to weep seized the old woman who realised that the indefinable, melancholy smile which used to be her special charm was no longer able to break through to the surface of the plaster mask which old age had fastened on her face. Then, suddenly discouraged from further attempts to please and considering it cleverer to accept the inevitable, she used it like a comic stage mask to make people laugh. But most of the women, knowing no respite in their effort to struggle against old age, held up their faces to their departing beauty, like mirrors in which they were passionately eager to capture the last rays of a setting sun. To accomplish this, some endeavoured to smooth out their faces, to extend the white surface, sacrificing the piquant effect of a slowly vanishing dimple or the mischievousness of an already condemned and half-disarmed smile; while others, seeing that their beauty had left them forever, were obliged to have recourse to expression, as one makes up for the loss of one's voice by perfecting one's enunciation, and clung desperately to a pout, a crow's-foot, a dreamy look, or sometimes a smile which, through failure

of rebellious muscles to coördinate, made them look as if they were crying.

One stout lady said good afternoon to me and during that short instant the most diverse thoughts came crowding into my mind. For a moment I hesitated to return her greeting, fearing that perhaps she did not recognise people any better than I and had taken me for someone else; but then her assurance made me, on the contrary, overdo the affability of my smile, for fear that she might be someone with whom I had been closely associated, and meanwhile my eyes continued to seek in her features the name I could not recall. Just as a candidate for the baccalaureate, uncertain what he should reply, fixes his gaze on the examiner's face and vainly hopes to find there the answer which he would do much better to seek in his own memory, in the same way, even as I smiled at her, I fastened my eyes on the stout lady's face. It seemed to me she was Mme. de Forcheville and so my smile took on a tinge of respect, while my indecision began to lessen. A second later I heard the stout lady say, "You took me for mamma; it is true I am beginning to look very much like her." And I recognised Gilberte.

Another point is that, even in the case of the men who had undergone only a slight change—merely their moustache having turned white, for example—one understood that this [illegible] It was as though [illegible] red mist or, better, [illegible] the appearance of their face, principally by making it vague, and shewed that what it allowed us to see as if life-size was in reality very far away, separated, it is true, by something very different from space, looking at us from a great distance, as though from the farther shore of a river and, we felt, having as much difficulty in recognising us as we were having in recognising them. Mme. de Forcheville—who looked to me as if they had filled her veins with some liquid, some kind of paraffin which keeps the skin firm and preserves it unchanged—was, perhaps, the only one who seemed like an old-time courtesan,

preserved in lifelike fashion for all time. "You take me for my mother," Gilberte had said. That was true. It would have been flattering for the daughter, by the way. And it was not only in her case that family traits had appeared which up till then had remained hidden in the features as completely as those parts folded inside a seed which are some day going to burst forth in a manner one would never guess. Thus, with one woman or another, an enormous maternal arching had come along about the age of fifty and transformed a nose that had previously been straight and fine. In the case of another, a banker's daughter, her complexion, as fresh as a dairymaid's, was taking on a russet, copperish hue, as though a reflexion of the gold her father had handled so much. Others had even come to look like their section of the city and bore, as it were, the reflexion of the Rue de l'Arcade, the Avenue du Bois, the Rue de l'Elysée. But most often they reproduced the features of their parents.

One starts out with the idea that people have remained the same and one finds them old. But once one starts out with the idea that they are old, one finds them much as they used to be, not looking so badly after all. As for Odette, it was more than that; once one knew her age and prepared oneself to see an old woman, her appearance seemed to challenge the laws of chronology more miraculously than the indestructibility of radium does those of nature. The reason I did not recognise her at once was not that she had changed so much but that she had changed so little. Having been discovering for the last hour how much that is *new* time adds to people's appearance and how much one must subtract in order to make them once more as I had known them, I performed this calculation quickly and added to the former Odette the number of years that had passed over her head; the result I obtained was a person who, it seemed to me, could not possibly be the one I had before my eyes, simply because the latter was identical with the one I used to know.

How much of this effect was due to cosmetics and dyeing

of the hair? Under her golden hair, arranged low on her head—looking somewhat like the disordered wig of a large mechanical doll surmounting an equally doll-like face, with its fixed expression of surprise—and her low-crowned straw hat, she looked as if she were representing the Exposition of 1878 (of which she would undoubtedly at that time have been the most incredible wonder, especially if she had then been her present age) which had come to say its little piece in an annual *revue*, but impersonated by a woman still in her youth.

A man who had been a minister before the Boulanger period and who was again in the cabinet also passed by, giving the ladies a quavering, far-away smile that seemed enmeshed in the countless trammels of the past; he was like a little phantom moved about by an invisible hand, diminished in size and changed in substance and looking like a miniature reproduction of himself in pumice stone. This former Prime Minister, now so well received in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, had years before been under criminal prosecution and execrated by high and low. But, thanks to the change in the composition of both these groups and also in the passions and even the recollections of such of the former individuals as still remained, there was no one left who knew of this, and he was held in high esteem. There is, therefore, no humiliation, however great, to which one should not resign himself readily, knowing that our buried mistakes will at the end of a few years be nothing but invisible dust, over which the smiling peace of nature will strew its flowers. When the pendulum of time swings back, the temporarily discredited individual will find himself taken up by two fresh social groups which will have only deferential respect and admiration for him and which he will be able to "lord it over" at his ease. But it is time alone that can accomplish this work; and at the time of his troubles nothing can console the accused individual for the fact that the young dairymaid opposite heard him called "grafter" by the crowd, as they shook their fists at him while he was getting into the

prison van, she not seeing things in their true position in the scheme of Time and not knowing that the men whom the morning newspaper fawns upon to-day were in high disfavour yesterday and that the man who is skirting prison at this moment and who, perhaps thinking of that young dairymaid, will not speak in a sufficiently humble tone to win public sympathy, will one day be acclaimed by the press and sought after by duchesses. Time removes family disputes in like manner. And at the Princesse de Guermantes' a husband and wife were to be seen whose respective uncles, now dead, had not been satisfied to exchange blows, but one of them, in order to humiliate the other, had sent his janitor and his butler as seconds for a duel, considering that men of social standing would have been too good for him. But these stories lay buried in the newspapers of thirty years ago and no one knew anything about them now. Thus the brightly lighted drawing-room of the Princesse de Guermantes was flower-bedecked and forgetful, like a peaceful cemetery. Within its walls, Time had not only worked the destruction of venerable creatures but had made possible, and had actually built up, new associations.

To return to that politician—despite the transformation of his physical substance, quite as profound as the change in the moral sentiments which he now evoked in the public mind—in a word, despite all the years that had passed since he had been Prime Minister, he had become minister again. This Prime Minister of forty years ago was a member of the new cabinet, the head of which had given him a portfolio much as a director of a theatre entrusts a rôle to a woman with whom he used to act but who retired long ago, because he considers her more capable of playing the part with *finesse* than the young actresses (also he knows her strained financial situation) and who at nearly eighty demonstrates before the public the integrity of her almost unimpaired talent, together with an undiminished vitality which, later, people are surprised to have remarked only a few days before her death.

Mme. de Forcheville's appearance was so miraculous that one could not even say that she had grown younger, but rather that, with all her carmines and her russet spots, she had burst into new bloom. She would have been the chief curiosity and principal attraction in a horticultural exhibition of the present day even more than of the Exposition Universelle of 1878. For me, indeed, she did not seem to say, "I am the Exposition of 1878," but rather, "I am the Allée des Acacias of 1892." It seemed as if she might still have been there. Moreover, just because she had not changed, she scarcely seemed to be alive. She looked like a sterilised rose. I said good afternoon to her and for quite a while she looked at me, trying to recall my name but in vain. Then I told it to her and at once, as though, thanks to this magic name, I had lost the appearance of a strawberry tree or a kangaroo which age had doubtless given me, she recognised me and began to talk to me with that characteristic voice which people who had applauded her in the small theatres and who were invited to lunch with her "in town" were so amazed to hear again in every remark she made throughout the entire conversation, to their hearts' content. That voice had remained the same, unnecessarily warm and alluring, with just a bit of English accent. And yet, just as her eyes seemed to be looking at me from a distant shore, her voice was sad, almost supplicating, like the voices of the dead in the *Odyssey*. Odette could still have gone on the stage. I complimented her on her youthful appearance. "You are very kind, my dear," she replied, and, as it was difficult for her not to give an affected tone even to the sincerest remark, through her anxiety to be well mannered, as she believed, she repeated several times, "Thank you so much, thank you so much." But I, who in former years had travelled so far just for a glimpse of her in the Bois, who, the first time I was at her house, had listened to the sound of her voice coming from her lips like some priceless treasure—I now thought the minutes spent with her interminable because of the impossibility of finding

anything to say to her, and so I moved away. Alas, she was not destined to remain long as she then was. Less than three years later, at a reception given by Gilberte, I was to see her, not in her second childhood but a little feeble-minded, no longer able to hide under an expressionless mask what she was thinking—"thinking" is putting it too strongly; feeling, rather—shaking her head, pursing her lips, shrugging her shoulders at each sensation that came to her, as a drunken man would do, or a child, or like some poets who are oblivious to their surroundings and, if the inspiration comes, write poetry even at a social gathering, or who frown and pout as they go in to dinner with a very much astonished lady on their arm. Mme. de Forcheville's feelings that evening—except the one that had led her to attend Gilberte's reception, namely, affection for her beloved daughter and pride over her holding such a brilliant reception, a pride that was not dimmed by the mother's sadness at no longer being of any importance—were not joyful and merely maintained a continual defence against the humiliations she was subjected to, a timorous defence, like that of a child. One heard on all sides remarks like these: "I don't know whether Mme. de Forcheville recognises me; perhaps I ought to get someone to introduce me again." "You don't need to go to that trouble, I can assure you," the other replied in a very loud voice, without thinking—or, possibly, without caring—that Gilberte's mother was hearing every word. "It's quite unnecessary. For all the pleasure you will get out of it! They leave her in her corner. Besides, she's a bit dotty." Mme. de Forcheville furtively turned her still beautiful eyes on her defamers and then quickly looked away for fear of having been impolite, upset, nevertheless, over the affront but keeping her impotent indignation to herself; you could see her head shaking and her chest heaving; she looked up again at another equally discourteous guest and was not unreasonably surprised for, having felt very poorly for several days, she had indirectly hinted to her daughter to postpone the affair but the daughter

had refused. Mme. de Forcheville did not love her any the less for this; all the duchesses arriving and everybody's admiration of the new residence flooded her heart with joy, and when the Marquise de Sebran, whose salon was so difficult of access even from the topmost rung of the social ladder, came in, Mme. de Forcheville felt that she had been a good, farsighted mother and that her maternal task had been accomplished. More snickering guests caused her to look up again and then talk to herself, if one can call it talking to use a language expressed only by gestures. Still so beautiful, she had become infinitely appealing, something she had never been before, for she who had betrayed Swann and everybody was being betrayed in turn by the whole universe; and she had become so feeble that she no longer dared, now that the rôles were reversed, even defend herself against mankind. And soon she would not put up any defence against death. But now, after anticipating our story in this way, let us return to three years before, that is to say, to the reception we are attending at the home of the Princesse de Guermantes

Bloch having asked me to introduce him to the master of the house, I did not raise any of the objections I encountered the first day I attended a reception at the Prince de Guermantes', objections which at the time appeared to me perfectly natural, whereas now it seemed such a simple matter to introduce to him one of his own guests, and I would even have thought nothing of taking the liberty of bringing with me and introducing unexpectedly someone he had not invited. Was it because, since that first day now so long ago, I had become one of the "regulars," although now for some time forgotten, of the social circle where that other day I had been such a newcomer; or because, on the contrary, not being a real society man, the things that seemed obstacles to them did not exist for me, once my timidity had disappeared; or was it because, now that people had bit by bit removed for me their first and often their second and third "false faces," I sensed, behind the Prince's

supercilious hauteur, a great human hunger to know his fellow beings, to get acquainted even with those he affected to disdain? Was it, perhaps, also because the Prince had changed, like all those who are overbearing in youth and middle life but whom old age softens (the more so as they had for a long time known by sight the newcomers and the strange ideas they balked at, and knew them to be entertained all around them) especially if the old age has had as adjuvants some virtues or vices which broaden one's contacts, or the revolution in one's ideas provoked by a political conversion such as the Prince's conversion to Dreyfusism?

Bloch questioned me, as I used to question others when I first entered society (and as I still occasionally did) about people I had formerly known socially and who were now as remote and aloof from everything as those people in Combray whom I had often wanted to "place" exactly. But for me Combray had a form so peculiarly its own, so impossible to blend with the rest, that it was like a piece of a jig-saw puzzle which I could never succeed in fitting into the map of France. "Then I can never get the slightest idea what the Prince de Guermantes used to be like by picturing to myself Swann and M. de Charlus?" asked Bloch, whose way of speaking I had long since borrowed and who now often imitated mine. "Not the slightest," I replied. "But where is the difference?" "You could understand only by hearing them talk together, and that is now impossible since Swann is dead and M. de Charlus is not far from it. But the differences between them were enormous." And while Bloch's eyes gleamed at the thought of what the conversation of those remarkable persons must have been, I was thinking that I had been exaggerating to him the pleasure I had had in associating with them, having never experienced any except when alone and a comprehension of the real differences between people coming to us only through our imagination. Did Bloch also notice this exaggeration? "Perhaps you are painting it in too rosy colours," he sug-

gested. "Take for example the mistress of this house, the Princesse de Guermantes; I know she is no longer young but, after all, it isn't so very long ago that you were talking to me about her incomparable charm, her marvellous beauty. I admit, of course, that she has an aristocratic air and also those remarkable eyes you used to tell me about, but on the whole I don't consider her such a matchless wonder as you used to say. She is evidently a thoroughbred but still . . ." I was obliged to tell Bloch that he was not talking of the same person. As a matter of fact, the Princesse de Guermantes had died and this was the former Mme. Verdurin, whom the Prince, ruined by the defeat of Germany, had married and [illegible] "You're mistaken; I looked [illegible] "and I found [illegible] ress where we [illegible] e bloods—wait a minute till I recall it—married to Sidonie, Duchesse de Duras, *née* Des Beaux." And, as a matter of fact, shortly after her husband's death, Mme. Verdurin had married the penniless old Duc de Duras, who had thereby made her a cousin of the Prince de Guermantes and had died two years later. He had proved a very useful stepping-stone for Mme. Verdurin, who through a third marriage was now the Princesse de Guermantes and had a very fine social position in the Faubourg Saint-Germain which would have greatly surprised people in Combray, where the ladies of the Rue de l'Oiseau, Mme. Goupil's daughter and Mme. de Sazerat's daughter-in-law, had in recent years, before Mme. Verdurin became the Princesse de Guermantes, been in the habit of saying with a sneer "the Duchesse de Duras," as if that had been a rôle which Mme. Verdurin was playing on the stage. And the caste idea requiring that she should die as "Mme. Verdurin," even her new title, which they did not imagine gave her any enhanced social standing, created, on the whole, a bad impression. "To set tongues wagging"—this expression, which in all ranks of society is applied to a woman who has a lover, might be applied by the Faubo[illegible]

Saint-Germain to women who published books, or by the middle-class folk of Combray to women who made ill-assorted marriages as to either age or social status. When she married the Prince de Guermantes, people must have said to one another that he was not really a Guermantes but an impostor. As for myself, when I reflected on this identity of name and title as a result of which there was a second Princesse de Guermantes, who bore no relation to the one who had so fascinated me but no longer existed and was like a defenceless dead person who had been robbed of name and title, it was for me as painful a thing as to see the objects that had belonged to Princess Hedwig, her château and all she had owned, being enjoyed by another woman. Inheriting another person's name is a melancholy thing, like all inheritances, all usurpations of property. And throughout all time, without interruptions, there would come an unbroken wave of Princesses de Guermantes—or rather, replaced in her functions by a different woman in each generation, a single Princesse de Guermantes would live for a thousand years, ignorant of death, indifferent to everything (which changes and wounds our hearts) and from time to time the name, like a sea, would draw together again over those who sank out of sight its changeless and immemorial placidity.

But—in contradiction to this permanence—the oldtimers declared that everything in the social world had changed, that people were received there who never would have been in their time; and this was both true and false. It was false for the reason that they failed to make allowance for the curve of time, by which the people of to-day saw these newcomers when they had already "arrived," whereas the oldtimers recalled them as they were when they started to climb the social ladder. And when those same oldtimers entered society, there were some people there who had "arrived" but whose start others recalled. One generation is long enough for such a change now, whereas it required centuries for the bourgeois name of a Colbert to acquire

noble rank. And from another point of view that statement might be true for, if people change their social status, the most deeply rooted opinions and customs, including that of inviting only the "best" people, also change (the same as fortunes and international alliances and hatreds). Snobbishness does not merely change its form; it might even disappear, like the war, and radicals and Jews be admitted to the Jockey Club.

To be sure, even this outward change in the faces I had known was only the symbol of an inner change which had been going on from day to day. The individuals had, perhaps, continued to do the same things but gradually, the opinion they held of these things and of the people they associated with having a little vitality, at the end of a few years they were fond of very different things and people, although under the same names, and, having themselves become different persons, it would have been surprising if they had not had new faces.

If in these twenty-year periods the conglomerates of social cliques broke up and came together again, according to the attraction of new stars, which were, themselves, destined to pass out of sight and then reappear, crystallisations, then disintegrations, followed by fresh crystallisations, were going on in the souls of the individuals themselves. While the Duchesse de Guermantes had been for me several different persons, to her and to Mme. Swann and others, a given person had been a favourite in the period prior to the Dreyfus case, then a fanatic or an imbecile from the beginning of that affair, which had changed people's values for them and regrouped about itself political parties which since then had again disbanded and re-formed What helps powerfully to bring this about and adds its influence to the pure intel-[illegible] which makes us for-

[illegible] the reasons that

[illegible] If anyone had

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[illegible] would have [illegible]

covered that she was the niece of the shopkeeper in building, Jupien, and that what had, perhaps, combined w this to make her strikingly attractive was that her uncl acted as procurer for M. de Charlus. But all that togetl had produced dazzling effects, while the causes, already mote, not only were unknown to many newcomers, but h been forgotten by many persons who had known them l whose minds were more on the present brilliant show th on the ignominy of the past, for a name is always accept at its present value. And the interesting thing about th transformations of the salons was that they were also result of the passage of time and a mnemonic phenomen

Among those present that day was a man of standing wl in a notable lawsuit, had just given testimony the weig of which was based solely on his unimpeachable moral ch acter, before which both judges and lawyers had unanimou bowed and which had brought about the condemnation two persons. There was consequently a stir of curiosity a deference when he entered the room. It was Morel. I w perhaps the only person who knew that he had been "kep by M. de Charlus and then by Saint-Loup and at the sa time by one of the latter's friends. Notwithstanding th past associations he greeted me with pleasure, although wi reserve. He remembered the time we met at Balbec a this recollection had for him the poetry and the melanch of youth.

But there were also some persons whom I could n recognise, never having known them, for in this salon Ti had exerted its chemical effect, not only on the individu themselves but also on the group. This social circle—in t distinctive composition of which, as determined by certa affinities that attracted to it all the leading titled names Europe, and also by a natural repulsion which alienated a non-aristocratic element, I had found a physical refuge f this name of Guermantes, to which it imparted its last tou

* "Father" in the French text, but reference to earlier volumes in t series indicates that this is an error —*F.A.B.*

of reality—had itself undergone a profound modification of its inner composition, which I had believed to be immutable. The presence here of people I had seen in a very different social environment and whom I would never have thought likely to make their way into this one surprised me less than the intimately familiar way they were received and called by their first names; a certain aggregate of aristocratic prejudices and snobbishness, which had served automatically to keep away from the Guermantes name everything that did not harmonize with it, had ceased to function.

Certain foreigners who, when I first went out into society, used to give great dinners to which they invited only the Princesse de Guermantes, the Duchesse de Guermantes, the Princesse de Parme, and who were given the place of honour at the houses of these ladies and were regarded as most firmly established in the society of that time (and perhaps really were so) had passed on without leaving any trace. Were they foreigners, here on a diplomatic mission, who had returned home? Or perhaps a scandal, a suicide, an abduction had prevented their appearing any more in society, or maybe they were Germans? But their names had owed their lustre only to the position they were occupying and no one bore them now; people did not even understand whom I was talking about and, if I spelled out their names, it was assumed that they were adventurers.

The persons who, according to the old social code, should not have been there were, to my great astonishment, on terms of close friendship with others of excellent family who had been willing to come and be bored at the Princesse de Guermantes' only for the sake of meeting their new friends. For the distinguishing characteristic of this social set was its prodigious aptitude at wiping out social classifications.

Whether relaxed or broken, the springs of the protective [illegible] matter was [illegible] d the dis- [illegible] e a senile [illegible] only with old dowager, the Faubourg [illegible]

timid smiles to insolent servants who invaded its drawing-rooms, drank its orangeade and introduced its* mistresses to it. But even so, the sensation of the passage of time and of the wiping out of a part of my vanished past was not so vividly conveyed to me by the breaking up of the oldtime Guermantes salon, that coherent composite of elements whose presence, assiduous attendance and interrelations were accounted for by a thousand reasons, a thousand subtle considerations, as it was explained by the disappearance of even a comprehension of the thousand reasons and considerations as a result of which certain people who still formed part of the salon were quite properly there and in their right place, whereas others who rubbed elbows with them there had a suspicious appearance of novelty. This lack of understanding applied not only to the social world, but also to the political and to everything. For people's memories do not last as long as they do themselves; and besides, some very young folk who had never had the knowledge of the past which the others had lost had now taken their places in society (quite legitimately, even in the aristocratic sense) and, people's origins being forgotten or unknown, everyone was accepted at the point—in his rise or his fall—which he happened to have reached at that time, as if that had always been his social status and as though the present Princesse de Guermantes and Bloch had always had the finest social position, and Clémenceau and Viviani had always been conservatives. And since some facts are more enduring than others, the hated memory of the Dreyfus case persisted vaguely in their minds because of what their fathers had told them about it, and if one mentioned to them that Clémenceau was once a Dreyfusard, they replied, "That's impossible; you are confusing him with someone else; he's on precisely the opposite side." Politicians with a checkered past and former public courtesans were regarded by them as paragons of virtue. Someone having asked a young man of one of the best families if there had not been something off-colour about

* One is tempted to assume an error for "their."—*F.A.B.*

Gilberte's mother, the young gentleman replied that it was true she had married an adventurer by the name of Swann in the early part of her life, but that later on she had married one of the most prominent men in society, the Comte de Forcheville. Doubtless some persons in that drawing-room —the Duchesse de Guermantes, for example—would have smiled at this statement (which seemed monstrous to me, since it denied Swann's fine social standing, although I myself in former years at Combray had believed with my great-aunt that Swann could not know "princesses")—as also some women who might have been present, but who scarcely went out any more, the Duchesses de Montmorency, de Mouchy, de Sagan, who had known Swann intimately but had never even seen Forcheville, who was not received in polite society at the time when they were still going out. But the truth of the matter is that the society of those days, like the faces today so different and the blond hair which had given place to white, no longer existed except in the memories of certain people whose number was diminishing from day to day. During the war Bloch had given up "going out" in the social circles he had been accustomed to frequent and where he cut such a sorry figure. On the other hand, he had not ceased publishing those books of his, the absurd sophistry of which I was to-day striving to demolish so as not to be shackled by it, books devoid of originality but which gave young people and many society women an impression of unusual intellectual eminence, a sort of genius. It was, therefore, after a complete break between his old social life and the present one that, launching out upon a new phase of his career, full of honour and glory, he had made his entry as a great man into a reconstituted social world. The young people did not know that he was making his *début* in society at that age, especially as a few names which he recalled from his association with Saint-Loup enabled him to make his present social prestige seem to date back indefinitely. And anyhow, he seemed to be one of those men of talent who in all ages have flourished in

fashionable society, and it did not occur to them that he might ever have lived in other surroundings.

As soon as I was through talking with the Prince de Guermantes, Bloch took possession of me and introduced me to a young woman who had heard the Duchesse de Guermantes speak of me a good deal. While the people of the newer generations rather looked down on the Duchess because she was acquainted with actresses and such, the ladies of her family—now well along in years—continued to regard her as a most remarkable person, partly because they knew all about her birth, her priority by ancestral rank and her intimate relations with what Mme. de Forcheville would have called "royalties," but also because she scorned family gatherings, was bored by them and it was known she could never be counted on to attend. Her theatrical and political connexions—imperfectly understood, by the way—only increased the infrequency of her appearances and therefore her prestige. In consequence, whereas political and artistic circles considered her a rather vaguely defined person, a sort of unfrocked priestess from the Faubourg Saint-Germain, who went about with under-secretaries of state and theatrical stars, in the Faubourg anyone giving a fashionable affair would say to herself, "Is it any use inviting Marie Sosthènes? She won't come. Well, just for form's sake. But I must not have any illusions." And when, toward half-past ten, Marie Sosthènes appeared in a dazzlingly beautiful gown, stopping at the threshold as though in majestic disdain and shewing in the cold glances she cast in their direction the contempt she appeared to feel for her cousins, if she stayed an hour, it was a more gala occasion for the aristocratic old lady who was giving the affair than it used to be for a theatre director when Sarah Bernhardt, having vaguely promised her coöperation without anyone counting on it, came and, with the utmost obligingness and simplicity, recited, not merely the one piece promised, but twenty more. The presence of Marie Sosthènes, whom cabinet heads addressed condescendingly but who, none the less,

sought to know more and more of them (that is the way people's minds work) sufficed to give to the dowager's affair—although all the other women present were likewise of the highest social standing—a place apart from and above all the other dowagers' affairs of that "season" (to borrow another term from Mme. de Forcheville) which Marie Sosthènes, one of the foremost social leaders of that day, had not bothered to attend. The name of the young woman to whom Bloch introduced me was entirely new to me and the names of the various members of the Guermantes family could not have been very familiar to her, for she asked an American woman on what grounds Mme. de Saint-Loup appeared to be on such intimate terms with all the most prominent people there. Now, this American woman was married to the Comte de Furcy, an undistinguished relative of the Forchevilles, to whom they represented all that was most brilliant in society. Therefore she replied most naturally, "It would be enough that she was born a Forcheville; there is nothing better than that." And yet Mme. de Furcy, while naïvely thinking the name of Forcheville superior to that of Saint-Loup, at least knew what the latter stood for. But the charming friend of Bloch and of the Duchesse de Guermantes was entirely ignorant of this and, being rather scatter-brained, replied in all good faith to a young girl who asked her how Mme. de Saint-Loup was related to the master of the house, the Prince de Guermantes, "Through the Forchevilles," and the young girl passed on this piece of information, as if she had known it all her life, to one of her girl friends, who, being excitable and of a mean disposition, turned as red as a fighting cock when a gentleman told her it was not through the Forchevilles that Gilberte was connected with the Guermantes, so that the gentleman thought he was mistaken, adopted her erroneous idea and promptly proceeded to spread it about. The dinners and social affairs were like a Berlitz School for the American woman. She heard the names and then repeated them without first having learned their value and all their rami-

fications. Someone who asked whether Tansonville come to Gilberte from her father, M. de Forcheville, told that it did not come in that way at all, that it w estate belonging to her husband's family, that Tanso was near Guermantes and belonged to Mme. de Mars but, being heavily mortgaged, had been bought in, a dowry, by Gilberte. Finally, an elderly gentleman o old school having spoken of the days when Swann v friend of the Sagans and the Mouchys, Bloch's Ame friend asked how I had come to know Swann and he s that I had met him at Mme. de Guermantes', having nc that he represented to me the country neighbour, my g father's young friend. Mistakes of this character have made by the most famous men and are regarded as pa larly serious in all conservative social circles. When S Simon wishes to shew that Louis XIV was so ignorant "he sometimes committed the grossest absurdities in lic," he cites only two examples of this ignorance, na that the King, not knowing that Rénel belonged to the mont-Gallerande family and Saint-Hérem to the Montr family, treated them both as men of no importance. At as far as Saint-Hérem is concerned, we have the consol of knowing that the King did not die in this mist opinion, for he was set right "much later" by M. d Rochefoucauld. "And even at that," Saint-Simon adds, a shade of condescension, "it was necessary to expla him what these noble houses were, as their names n nothing to him." This speedy oblivion, which so qu covers even the most recent past, and this all-inva ignorance react in a way to confer the rank of eruc on a modest body of knowledge—all the more to be p because it is so seldom met with—covering the geneal of people, their true social position, the reasons of money or aught else for which they allied themselves to and such a family or married below their station—a kr edge highly esteemed in all social circles where a cons tive spirit prevails, a knowledge which my grandf

possessed to the highest degree concerning the middle-class folk of Combray and Paris, a knowledge which Saint-Simon valued so highly that, when he comes to extol the marvellous intelligence of the Prince de Conti, even before he mentions the sciences or, rather, as though it were the first of the sciences, he praises him as "a man with a very fine mind, clear, just, accurate, broad, a well read man who forgot nothing, who knew genealogies, their myths and their realities, shewing a discriminating politeness in conformity with rank and social merit, performing all the duties of the princes of the blood which to-day they neglect. He spoke his mind freely, even concerning their usurpations, and the story of books and conversations furnished him opportunity to bring in whatever he considered most agreeable concerning birth, appointments and so forth." Although less brilliant, my grandfather knew with equal accuracy all that had to do with the middle-class folk of Combray and Paris and he relished it with no less of a connoisseur's delight. They had already become rare, those epicures and devotees of genealogy who knew that Gilberte was not a Forcheville, nor Mme. de Cambremer a Méséglise, nor the younger a Valintonais—rare and perhaps not even drawn from the ranks of the highest aristocracy (for it is not necessarily the assiduous churchgoers, nor even the Catholics, who are the most learned about *The Golden Legend* or thirteenth-century stained-glass windows) but often from a secondary aristocracy, more keenly appreciative of what it seldom has an opportunity to approach and which for that very reason it has more leisure to study, reassembling with pleasure, coming to know one another, holding succulent group dinners after the fashion of La Société des Bibliophiles or La Société des Amis de Reims, at which they feast on genealogies. Women are not admitted, but each husband, as he comes home, says to his wife, "It was a most interesting dinner. There was a M. de La Raspelière there who held us spellbound, explaining that that Mme. de Saint-Loup who has the

pretty daughter is not a Forcheville at all. It's as interesting as a novel."

The friend of Bloch and of the Duchesse de Guermantes was not only stylish and charming but also intelligent and it was pleasant to talk with her, but difficult because not only her name was new to me, but also the names of a large number of people she spoke of, who now comprised the basis of that social group. It is true, on the other hand, that when she asked me to tell her about society people I knew, many of the names I mentioned meant absolutely nothing to her; they had all fallen into oblivion—at least, those that had shone only with the individual glory of one person and were not the generic and permanent name of some famous aristocratic family (whose exact title the young woman seldom knew, assuming erroneous origins on the strength of a name she had caught incorrectly at a dinner the night before). Most of the names she had never even heard, not having begun to go out into society (not only because she was still young, but also because she had not been living long in France and had not been invited out at once) until some years after I had withdrawn from social life. Consequently, even though we had a common vocabulary of words for the names, each of us used it differently. [illegible]

mantes, who was now dancing attendance on her, but she had gotten a false impression, as I could see from the disdainful tone in which this young snob replied, "Do I know who Mme. Leroi is? An old friend of Bergotte," as if to say "a person I would never have been willing to invite to my house." I understood at once that the old friend of Mme. Guermantes, being a well bred man of the world, imbued with the Guermantes spirit, one of the traits of which was not to seem to attach too much importance to aristocratic social connexions, had felt it would be silly and anti-Guermantes to say, "Mme. Leroi, who was received by all the

Royal Highnesses and all the duchesses," and he had preferred to say, "She was rather odd. This is what she replied one day to Bergotte . . ." Only for people who do not know, this sort of information given in conversation is like that given by the press to the common people, who believe alternately, following their newspapers, that M. Loubet and M. Reinach are thieves or fine citizens. To the young woman I was talking with, Mme Leroi had been a sort of Mme. Verdurin of the earliest manner, with less brilliance and with a "little clan" limited to Bergotte alone. This young woman, by the way, was, by mere chance, one of the last persons to hear the name of Mme Leroi. To-day no one any longer knows who she was, which is, moreover, quite as it should be. Her name does not even appear in the index of the posthumous memoirs of Mme. de Villeparisis, whose thoughts were so much occupied with Mme. Leroi. The Marquise, I hasten to add, omitted mention of Mme. Leroi not so much because the latter during her lifetime had acted in an unfriendly manner toward her as because nobody could be interested in her after her death, and this silence is dictated, not so much by the woman's rancour over social slights as by the writer's literary sense. My conversation with Bloch's stylish friend was charming, for the young woman was intelligent, but this difference between our respective vocabularies made it difficult, although at the same time instructive. It does us no good to know that the years go by, that youth gives way to old age, that the most stable thrones and fortunes crumble, that fame is ephemeral, our way of forming a conception—and, so to speak, taking a photograph—of this moving universe, hurried along by Time, seeks on the contrary to make it stand still. Consequently, we always see as young the people we knew when they were young, while those whom we knew in their old age we clothe retrospectively in the past with the virtues of old age, and we have unlimited confidence in the credit of a billionaire or in the favour of a sovereign, albeit knowing by our reason, but not

actually believing, that to-morrow they may be fugi stripped of their power. In a more limited sphere, e sively social—as though in a simple problem serving a introduction to more complicated difficulties of the order—the lack of understanding which in my convers with the young woman resulted from the fact that we lived in the same social circle, it is true, but twenty-five [illegible]

appear to-day and as though the past did not exist, prevents a recently landed American woman from seeing M. de Charlus had the finest social position in Paris time when Bloch had none at all, and that Swann, went to so much trouble for M. Bontemps, had been tr in the friendliest manner by the Prince of Wales—th norance does not exist only among the newcomers in so but also among those who have always frequented cl related groups and, in both these cases, it is again o the effects of Time (but acting in this instance not o social curve, but on the individual). It is true, no m how much we may change our social environment, our of living, nevertheless our memory, by retaining the t of our continuous personality, attaches to it through the cessive periods the recollection of the various social g in which we have lived even forty years before. Blo the Prince de Guermantes' reception was perfectly awa the humble Jewish environment in which he had lived a age of eighteen; and Swann, when he had ceased to Mme. Swann but was in love with a woman who serve at the same Colombin's where Mme. Swann for some thought it was "chic" to go, as to the tea-room in the Royale, was very well aware of his own social stan remembering Twickenham, and had no doubts conce the reasons why he went to Colombin's rather than t Duchesse de Broglie's, knowing perfectly well that, eve

he been a thousand times lower in the social scale, this would not have prevented him from going to Colombin's or to the Ritz Hotel, since anyone can go there if he pays. Doubtless Bloch's and Swann's friends also remembered the humble Jewish environment and the invitations to Twickenham and therefore these friends, thinking of the Swann and Bloch of those days as other selves somewhat less distinct, did not separate in their memory the fashionable Bloch of to-day from the sordid Bloch of former years, or the Swann of Colombin's in the last years of his life from the Swann of Buckingham Palace. But these friends were, in a way, Swann's neighbors in life; their own lives had progressed along lines sufficiently close for their memories to be filled with recollections of him; while in the case of others less close to him, at a greater distance from him, not socially speaking but as far as intimacy was concerned, so that the acquaintance had been more vague and the meetings less frequent, the relative paucity of recollections had rendered their idea of him more hazy. Now, virtual strangers like this at the end of thirty years no longer remember anything specific which could connect the man they have before them to-day with the distant past and thereby affect his present social standing. In the last years of Swann's life, I heard society people who should have known better say when he was mentioned, as though that had been his sole title to fame, "You mean the Swann of Colombin's?" And now I heard people who should have known better say, speaking of Bloch, "The Guermantes Bloch? The close friend of the Guermantes?" These mistakes which bisect a human life and, by isolating the present from the past, make of the man in question another and very different man, as though freshly created the day before, a man who is merely the condensation of his present habits (whereas he carries within himself the continuity of his life, which connects him with the past) these mistakes are also dependent on Time, but they are a mnemonic phenomenon, not a social one. At that very moment I had an example—of a somewhat different

sort, it is true, but only the more striking for that reason—of this forgetfulness which changes the appearance of people in our eyes. A young nephew of Mme. de Guermantes, the Marquis de Villemandois, had formerly been so persistently insolent toward me that I had been forced, in retaliation, to adopt such an insulting attitude toward him that we had tacitly become virtual enemies. While I was meditating on Time at this reception at the Princesse de Guermantes', he got someone to introduce him to me, saying that he believed I had known some of his relatives and that he had read some articles of mine and was anxious to make (or renew) my acquaintance. It is only right to say that, as he had grown older, his impertinence, as so often happens, had given way to seriousness and he no longer had the same arrogant manner, also that people were talking about me in the social circle he frequented because of some articles—of very slender value, however. But these reasons for his cordiality and his advances to me were only secondary. The principal reason or, at any rate, the one that made it possible for the others to come into play, was that, either because he had a poorer memory than I or because he had paid less attention to my retorts than I had to his offensive remarks, I being a less important personage in his eyes at that time than he in mine, he had completely forgotten our unfriendly relations. At the most, my name recalled to him that he must have seen me or one of my family at the house of one of his aunts and, not being exactly sure whether we had met before, he hastened to mention the aunt at whose house he felt certain he must have met me, remembering that they often used to speak of me, but not remembering our quarrels. A name is frequently all that is left to us of a human being, not when he is dead but even while he is still alive. And our present ideas about him are so vague or so strange and correspond so little to those we formerly had of him that we have entirely forgotten that we came near fighting a duel with him, but we do recall that, when a child, he used to wear queer yellow leggings in the Champs-Elysées, although he, on the con-

trary, in spite of our assurances, has no recollection of having played with us in them. Bloch had come in, leaping like a hyena. I thought to myself, "He comes into drawing-rooms *now* where he could not have gotten a foot in twenty years ago." But then, too, he was twenty years older. He was that much nearer death. So what good did that do him? From close up, in the translucency of a face in which, when seen from afar and in a dim light, I had discerned only gay youthfulness—either persisting there or evoked by me from my memory—there was to be found the anxious, almost terrifying countenance of an old Shylock, "made up" and waiting in the wings for the moment to go on the stage and already reciting his first lines in a low voice. Ten years hence, in these same drawing-rooms, whose impotence will have forced his acceptance as master, he will come in on crutches, thinking it a tiresome duty to have to go to call on the La Trémoilles. And what good did that do him?

From the changes which had occurred in society I could all the more readily extract some important truths, suitable to give cohesiveness to part of my book, because they were in no way peculiar to our time, as I might at first have been tempted to believe. When I myself, just entering society and more of a newcomer even than Bloch is now, had been received into the Guermantes circle, I must have regarded as forming an integral part of this circle some elements, wholly different from it and only recently admitted, who seemed new and strange to older members of the group whom I did not distinguish from them and who, in their turn, although supposed by the dukes of that time to have been members of the Faubourg since the very beginning, had one time been *parvenus*, either they or their fathers or grandfathers. Consequently, it was not their standing as members of the best society which made this company so brilliant, but it was the fact of having been more or less completely assimilated by this social circle which gave their standing to people who, fifty years later, all seemed to be on the same social footing. Even in that past to which I traced back the Guermantes

name in order to give it all its grandeur (and with good reason, by the way, for under Louis XIV the Guermantes, being almost a royal family, occupied an even more prominent position in society than to-day) the phenomenon that I was now observing used also to occur. Do we not find them at that time allying themselves by marriage, for example, with the Colbert family, which to-day seems to us of very noble rank, it is true, since marrying a Colbert is regarded as a fine match for a La Rochefoucauld? But the Guermantes did not ally themselves with the Colberts on account of the latter being noble, for they were simple bourgeois at that time; rather, it was through their alliance with the Guermantes that they became noble. If the name of Haussonville dies out with the present representative of that house, it will perhaps derive its glory from its descent from Mme. de Staël, whereas before the Revolution M. d'Haussonville, one of the first lords of the realm, prided himself before M. Broglie on the fact that he was not acquainted with Mme. de Staël's father and could no more introduce him than could M. Broglie himself, little suspecting that the son of one of them would one day marry the daughter, and the son of the other the granddaughter, of the author of *Corinne*. I realised from what the Duchesse de Guermantes said to me that I might have enjoyed in this social set the standing of a man of fine position who, while not titled, is readily believed to have connexions with the aristocracy dating back many centuries, such a standing as Swann had had and, before him, M. Lebrun, M. Ampère and all those friends of the Duchesse de Broglie, who at the beginning was by no means in the first ranks of society. On the first occasions when I dined at Mme de Guermantes', how deeply I must have shocked men like M. de Beaucerfeuil, not so much by the fact of my being there as by remarks of mine testifying to my complete ignorance of the memories which made up his past and determined the form of his social habits. Some day, when Bloch was very old and remembered, far in the past, the Guermantes salon as it looked to him to-day, he would feel

the same astonishment, the same vexation, in the presence of similar intruders and ignorant newcomers. And on the other hand, he would doubtless have acquired and would radiate about him those qualities of tact and discretion which I had believed to be the exclusive privilege of men like M. de *Norpois*, but which come together again and reappear in men who seem to us, above all others, incapable of possessing *them*. To mention another point, the opportunity which had offered ...

this social phenomenon was not as isolated as it had at first appeared to me and that, from the Combray basin where I was born, quite numerous after all were the fountains that had *risen* symmetrically with myself above the liquid mass which had fed them all. To be sure, since circumstances always vary somewhat and temperaments are never exactly alike, it was in entirely different ways that Legrandin (through his nephew's strange marriage) had in his turn succeeded in gaining admittance to this social circle, that Odette's daughter had become related to it and that Swann himself and finally I had entered it. To me who had gone throu

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vergent path, just as the traveller who is following the course of a stream in a deep valley does not see that another stream flowing in a different direction, despite the windings of its course, empties into the same river. But taking a bird's-eye view, as does the statistician who ignores the sentimental reason or the avoidable imprudences which led to the death of this or that person and counts merely the number of persons who die per year, it was evident that several individuals starting from one and the same environment, the depicting of which occupied the opening period of this story, had all made their way into an entirely different environment; and it is probable that, since an average number of marriages ar

performed in Paris every year, any other wealthy, cultured, middle-class social group would have furnished an approximately e- [illegible] my-self and [illegible] to the ocea [illegible] are easily discernible there, for although the young Comte de [illegible]

climb the social ladder, the same traits as had characterised his uncle Legrandin, that is to say, an old friend of my parents who, although of aristocratic mien, was of thoroughly bourgeois extraction.

Kindness, merely a ripening process which has succeeded in sweetening natures more basically acid than Bloch's, is as widespread as the sentiment of justice, thanks to which, if our cause is sound, we need not fear a hostile judge any more than a friendly one. And Bloch's grandchildren would be kind and considerate almost by birth. Bloch himself had not perhaps yet reached that point. But I observed that, whereas he formerly used to pretend to believe that he had to take a two-hour railway journey in order to call on someone who had given him but a perfunctory invitation, now that he was receiving many invitations, not only to luncheon and dinner but to spend a fortnight here and a fortnight there, he refused many of them without announcing the fact or boasting that he had received and declined them. Discretion, in both word and deed, had come to him along with social standing and age, with a sort of social age, if one may use the term. It is true that Bloch had formerly been indiscreet, as well as incapable of kindliness or friendly counsel. But some difficulties and some qualities are not so much attached to this or that individual or to this or that moment of existence, considered from the social point of view. They are, as it were, exterior to the individual, who passed through their beam of light as through various pre-existent, general and inevitable solstices. Doctors who try to ascertain

whether a certain medicine lessens or increases the acidity of the stomach, stimulates or retards its secretions, obtain varying results, not only according to the stomach from which they take a little of its gastric juice but according to whether they take it when the remedy has been more or less completely assimilated.

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Thus, at every point in its existence the name of Guermantes, considered as a conglomerate of all the names it comprised within and around itself, suffered losses and enrolled new elements, like those gardens in which, in a continuous process, flowers scarcely in bud, ready to take the places of those which are beginning to fade, lose their identity in a mass that appears unchanged except to those persons who have not been witnessing the succession of new blooms and therefore have retained in their memories an exact picture of the flowers that have disappeared.

Many a person among those brought together, or revived in my memory, by this afternoon reception recalled to my mind the series of appearances he had presented to me through the succession of various and contrasting circumstances amid which he had come before my eyes, and in this way he threw into relief the various phases of my life, the differences of perspective, even as some chance feature of the landscape, a hill or château, appearing now on the right, now on the left, seems first to tower above a forest, then to rise out of a valley, and thus discloses to the traveller changes of direction and differences of altitude in the road he is following. Going farther and farther back into the past, I finally came upon mental pictures of one and the same person, separated by such long intervals of time and impressed on such widely different phases of my own personality that I had been in the habit of leaving them out of account even when I thought I was reviewing the entire course of my past relations with that person, and I had even ceased to believe that they represented the individual I had formerly known.

and it required the accident of a sudden flash of conscious attention for me to connect them to the original significance they had had for me, as to an etymological root. From the other side of the hedge of pink hawthorn Mlle. Swann gave me a look, the amorous significance of which I had had to reconstruct in retrospect. Mme. Swann's lover—at least, so Combray regarded him—looked at me across that same hedge with a sharp scrutiny which, likewise, did not mean what I thought it did at the time and, besides, he later changed so much that I did not recognise him at all in the person of the gentleman who was looking at a playbill at Balbec, near the Casino, whom I afterwards used to recall to mind by chance every ten years or so, saying to myself, "Why, that was M. de Charlus, away back there! How strange!" Mme. de Guermantes at Dr. Percepied's wedding; Mme. Swann in pink at my great-uncle's; Mme. de Cambremer, Legrandin's sister, so stylish-looking that he was afraid we would ask him to give us a recommendation to her—these memory pictures, as well as many more connected with Swann, Saint-Loup and others, when they recurred to my mind, I found enjoyment in placing like façades at the threshold of my relations with these different people, although they seemed to me to be only illustrations and not impressions made on my mind by the persons themselves, with whom they appeared to have no connexion. Not only is it true that some people have a good memory and others have not (without going as far as the customary continual forgetfulness of Turkish ambassadors)—which makes it possible for the latter always to find room for a contradictory piece of information when reported to them, the preceding one having vanished at the end of a week or its successor having been able to exorcise it. But even if their memories are equally good, two persons do not recall the same items. One of them will have paid little attention to an act which the other will always regret keenly, whereas the former will have caught on the wing, as a friendly and characteristic sign, a word that the latter uttered offhand, almost without

giving it a thought. When one has broached a prophecy that has proved false, the egoistic desire not to have been mistaken shortens one's memory of this prophecy and permits one very soon to maintain that one did not make it. And lastly, a deeper, less selfish interest causes the recollections to vary

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years' absence, in place of the rancours you had expected, you find unintentional and unconscious forgiveness and, on the other hand, so many hatreds, the reason for which you cannot explain—because you have, on your side, forgotten the bad impression you had created. One forgets the dates of events in the lives even of the people one has known best. And because it was at least twenty years since she had first met Bloch, Mme. de Guermantes would have sworn that he had been born into her social circle and, at the age of two, had been dandled on the knee of the Duchesse de Chartres.

And how many times these people had reappeared before my eyes in the course of their lives, the changing circumstances of which seemed to present the same human beings, it is true, but under various forms and for varying purposes; and the diversity of the periods at which my life had been crossed by the thread of the life of each of these persons had finally resulted in the periods which seemed farthest back becoming interwoven as if life had at its disposal only a limited number of threads for weaving the most dissimilar patterns. What could be more widely separated in my diverse past experiences, for example, than my visits to my uncle Adolphe, or the nephew of Mme. de Villeparisis, the Maréchal's cousin, or Legrandin and his sister, or Françoise's friend, the former waistcoat-maker in the courtyard of our building? And to-day all these different strands had been brought together to make the weft here of the Saint-Loup *ménage*, there of the young Cambremer couple of the early days, not to mention Morel and so many others who, coming together, had combined to form such a well defined circum-

stance that it seemed to me that it was the complete unit the persons merely component parts. And I had alr lived long enough so that, for more than one of the hu beings with whom I had come in contact, I found in antip regions of my past memories another being to complet picture. To the Elstirs, whom I saw here in a place w was of itself an indication of fame already won, I could the earliest recollections of the Verdurins and the Cott the conversation in the restaurant at Rivebelle, the after tea at which I became acquainted with Albertine, an many other memories. In much the same way, when a lover is shewn a panel of an altar screen he remembe what church, museum and private collection the other p are dispersed (likewise he finally succeeds, by followin catalogues of art sales or frequenting antique shops, in ing the mate of the object he possesses, thereby compl the pair, and is able to reconstruct in his mind the pre and the entire altar). Just as a bucket being hauled u a windlass rubs against the rope again and again an opposite sides, there was no person, hardly even a singl ject, having occupied a place in my life, that had not cessively played different parts in it. A mere social nexion or even a material object, for example—if the r lection of it came back to me a few years later, I obse that life had kept on weaving about it different th which finally gave it a beautiful velvet coating, like which in old parks enwraps a plain water pipe in a sh of emerald.

It was not only the outward appearance of these ind uals which suggested dream figures. Even to thems their earlier life, already slumbering in their youth and loves, had become more and more a dream. They had gotten even their rancours and their hates and, in ord convince themselves that the person before them was in the one with whom they had not been on speaking term years before, they would have had to consult a register this was as vague as a dream in which one was insulted

by whom, one can no longer recall. It was just such dreams which produced contradictory situations in political life, where one saw in one and the same cabinet people who had accused one another of murder or treason. And with certain old men this dream became as impenetrable as death in the days immediately following an amorous indulgence. During these days it was impossible to put any question to the President of the Republic; he had lost his memory completely. Then, after one let him rest for a few days, the remembrance of public affairs came back to him as casually as the recollection of a dream.

Sometimes more than one picture came into my mind of this being who was so different from the person I had known since then. [illegible] be a gentle, [illegible] a ghost at th[illegible] cloak or by [illegible] her ancestral name enveloped the Duchesse de Guermantes—almost legendary origins, a fascinating mythology of social relations which became so banal in later years but which these origins carried back into the past as though up into the boundless sky with a refulgence similar to that which is shed by the sparkling tail of a comet. And even relations that had not had their beginnings in a mysterious past, like mine with Mme. de Souvré, to-day so stiff and purely formal, retained in my earliest recollections of them their first smile, calmer, sweeter, so suavely outlined in the full richness of an afternoon by the sea or the end of a Spring day in Paris, turbulent with carriages, clouds of dust and rippling sunshine. And perhaps Mme. de Souvré would not have counted for much if one had removed her from this frame, like those monuments—Santa Maria della Salute, for example—which, without great beauty of their own, produce an admirable effect in their own setting; but she formed part of a batch of souvenirs which I valued at a certain price, "taken as a lot," without trying to figure out exactly what part should be credited to Mme. de Souvré's personality.

With all these human beings one thing which struck me even more forcibly than the modifications they had undergone in physical appearance and social standing was the change caused by the different ideas they had of one another. Legrandin formerly used to despise Bloch and never addressed a word to him, but now he was very friendly with him. This was not at all because of the better social position to which Bloch had attained, in which case it would not be worth mentioning, for social changes necessarily bring corresponding changes in standing among those concerned. No, the reason was that people—and by "people" I mean what they represent to us—do not have in our memories the fixity of a painting. Their evolution is at the mercy of our forgetfulness. Sometimes this goes so far that we even confuse one person with another. "Bloch? Why, that's someone who used to come to Combray." And by "Bloch" they meant me. Conversely, Mme. de Sazerat was positive that a certain historical treatise on Philip II was by me, whereas it was by Bloch. Without going as far as these substitutions, we forget the sordid tricks someone played us.

we were on friendly terms. It was to such an antecedent situation that Legrandin's behaviour corresponded in his friendliness toward Bloch, either because he had lost all recollection of a certain period in the past or because he considered it outlawed—a compound of forgiveness, forgetfulness and indifference which is likewise a product of Time. Furthermore, even between lovers, the recollections we have of one another never correspond exactly. I had known Albertine to recall to my mind with marvellous exactitude some remark I had made to her at one of our first meetings which I had completely forgotten, while she had no recollection of some other fact which had been driven into my head for all time, like a pebble. Our parallel lives were like the two borders of a garden path where urns of flowering plants are placed symmetrically at regular intervals, but not opposite

one another. And, with even more reason, it is easy to understand that, in the case of someone we know only slightly, we might scarcely remember who he is, or recall something different and farther back in the past than what we more recently thought of him, something suggested by the people among whom we meet him again and who have known him for only a short time, endowed with social attributes and standing which he did not formerly possess but which we, in our forgetfulness, accept instanter.

It is true that life, in bringing these people across my path, had repeatedly presented them to me under special circumstances which, surrounding them completely, had hemmed in the view I had of them and thereby hindered me from knowing their true natures. Even these Guermantes, who had been the object of such a magnificent dream when I had first approached one of them, later appeared in my [illegible] grandmother's old friends.

[illegible] the Casino. (For between us and other [illegible] is a narrow margin of contingencies, as my reading at Combray had shewn me there is of perception, which prevents an absolute contact between the mind and reality.) Consequently, it was only afterwards, when I connected them with the name, that my acquaintance with them became for me acquaintance with the Guermantes. But it may be it was precisely that which made life more poetic for me when I reflected how that mysterious race with piercing eyes and bird-like beaks, that pink, golden, unapproachable race, had so often and so naturally, as a result of blind and varying circumstances, happened to offer itself for my contemplation, for social intercourse and even intimate friendship with me, to such an extent that, when I wished to make the acquaintance of Mlle. Stermaria or to have some gowns made for Albertine, it was to members of the Guermantes family that I turned, as to my most helpful friends. It is true that it bored me as much to go to call on them as on the other so-

ciety people I met later. Even in the case of the Duchesse de Guermantes (as with certain of Bergotte's pages) I felt her charm only from afar; it vanished when I came near her because it existed only in my memory and my imagination. But when all was said and done, the Guermantes, and Gilberte also, differed from the other society folk in that they plunged their roots deeper into a period of my past life when I used to dream more and had more faith in people. What came over me with ennui as I talked now with any of them was at any rate those of my childhood fantasies which had seemed to me the most beautiful and the most inaccessible, and I consoled myself, like a merchant who becomes entangled in his bookkeeping, by confusing the value of possessing them with the price at which my desire had appraised them.

But in the case of other persons, the memory of my earlier relations with them was turgid with more ardent dreams, conceived without hope, in which my life of that time, wholly consecrated to them, expanded so richly that I found it difficult to understand how the realisation of those dreams could possibly be this thin, narrow, lustreless ribbon of zestless, unprized intimacy in which I was unable to recapture the slightest vestige of what had constituted their mystery, their fine frenzy and their sweetness.

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"What has become of the Marquise d'Arpajon?" asked Mme. de Cambremer. "Why, she is dead," Bloch replied. "You are confusing her with the Comtesse d'Arpajon, who died last year." Thereupon the Princesse de Malte joined in the discussion; as the young widow of an aged, wealthy nobleman, bearer of an illustrious name, she was much sought after in marriage and this had given her a great deal of assurance. "The Marquise d'Arpajon," she interposed, "also died about a year ago." "What! a year ago? I assure you that is not so," replied Mme. de Cambremer. "I attended a musicale at her house less than a year ago."

between the aged society folk who were dead and those who were sick or out of town or living in the country, established the insignificance of the dead quite as definitely as did the lack of interest of those who were in doubt.

"But if she is not dead, how does it happen one never sees her any more, nor her husband either?" inquired a spinster who liked to make witty remarks. "I tell you," replied her mother who, although fifty years of age, never missed a society function, "it's because they're old; people of that age don't go out any more." It seemed as though there were in front of the cemetery an entire segregated district of old people, the lamps in its foggy streets always lighted. Mme. de Sainte-Euverte brought the discussion to a close by explaining that the Comtesse d'Arpajon had died a year before, after a long illness, but that the Marquise d'Arpajon had also died, although more recently and very suddenly, "of some utterly insignificant ailment"—wherein her death resembled the lives of all these people and also explained why she passed away unnoticed, and excused people's confusing her with the Countess. On hearing that Mme. d'Arpajon really was dead, the unmarried woman cast an anxious glance at her mother who, she feared, might be shocked to learn of the death of one of her contemporaries; in anticipation she pictured herself hearing people say, in explanation of her mother's death, "The death of Mme. d'Arpajon was a great shock to her." But the mother, on the contrary, every time someone of her own age "passed on," felt as if she had carried off the prize in a contest with distinguished competitors. Their death furnished the only means left to her of being made agreeably conscious of her own existence. The spinster noticed that her mother, who had not seemed sorry to announce that Mme. d'Arpajon was a recluse in one of those abodes whence enfeebled old folk seldom issue forth again, had been even less grieved to learn that the Marquise had entered the City of the Hereafter, whence there is no return. The old maid's caustic spirit was amused to note this indifference on her mother's part. And

later on she entertained her friends with a "side-splittin[illegible] story of the sprightly way she claimed her mother had [illegible] marked, rubbing her hands together, "My God, so po[illegible] Mme. d'Arpajon is really dead!" Even people who did n[illegible] need this death to make them rejoice that they were st[illegible] alive found happiness in it. For every death simplifies e[illegible] istence for others, relieves them of the need of scrupulousl[illegible] shewing their gratitude or the obligation to pay calls. How[illegible] ever, as I have already related, the death of M. Verduri[illegible] was not received in this manner by Elstir.

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One lady left, for she had other receptions to go to and she was to have tea with two queens. It was that famous society courtesan whom I had formerly known, the Princesse de Nassau. Except for the fact that she was not as tall as formerly—which, because of her head now being on a lower level, gave her the air of having "one foot in the grave," as people say—one could scarcely have said that she looked any older. With her Austrian nose and her charming glance, she was still a Marie-Antoinette, well preserved, embalmed with a thousand cosmetics adorably combined to give a lilac hue to her complexion. Over her features floated a vague, regretful [illegible] of tenderly promising to r[illegible] account of the large numb[illegible] was expected. Born almos[illegible] three times, long and luxu[illegible] by big bankers (without counting the innumerable passing fancies she had allowed herself) she bore as lightly as she did her exquisite round eyes, delicately painted face and mauve gown, the somewhat jumbled memories of her thickly peopled past. As she passed in front of me, running away "*à l'anglaise*," I bowed to her. She recognised me, clasped my hand and fixed her round, mauve-coloured eyes on me with an expression that seemed to say, "How long since we last met—let's

talk about it some other time." She pressed my hand firmly, unable to recall exactly whether or not, one evening when she was taking me home from the Duchesse de Guermantes', there had been a love passage between us. Just on a chance, she appeared to allude to something that had never happened, which was not hard for her to do, because she would put on a tender air over a strawberry tart and, if obliged to leave before the end of the music, would assume an attitude as if heartbroken over a sudden departure which, however, was not to be final. Furthermore, in doubt concerning that incident with me, she did not prolong the furtive handclasp or utter a word, but merely looked at me, as I have said, in a way that signified, "How long it has been!" And in this look there passed in review her husbands, the men who had "kept" her, two wars; and her star-like eyes, like an astronomical clock carved out of an opal, marked successively all those solemn hours of a far distant past, which she recaptured at any moment when she wished to give you a greeting which was always at the same time an apology. Then, leaving me, she hurried toward the door so that no one should go to any trouble on her account and to shew me that the reason she had not stopped to talk with me was because she was in a hurry—also to make up for the minute lost in shaking hands with me, lest she be late at the residence of the Queen of Spain, with whom she was to have tea alone. Even when she was near the door, I thought she was going to break into a run. As a matter of fact, she was running toward her grave.

All this while the Princesse de Guermantes could be heard repeating with an excited air and a metallic rattle in her voice, caused by her false teeth, "That's it! We'll get up a little clan! How I like these intelligent young people who take part in everything! Ah, what a muzhishian you are!" She talked on, her big monocle in her round eye, which seemed partly amused and partly apologising for its inability to keep up the gaiety for a long time; but to the very last

she was determined to "take part in everything" and "get up a little clan."

* * *

I sat down beside Gilberte de Saint-Loup. We talked a great deal of Robert. Gilberte spoke of him in a deferential tone, as if he had been some superior being whom she was anxious to shew me she had admired and understood. We reminded one another how the ideas he used to develop concerning military strategy (for he had often repeated to her at Tansonville the same theories that I had heard him sustain at Doncières and afterwards) had often and in many points, after all, been verified by the late war. "I cannot tell you how vividly the slightest thing he said to me at Doncières comes back to me now and did also during the war. The last words I heard him utter when we parted, never to meet again, were that he expected Hindenburg, as a Napoleonic general, to maneuver for a battle along the lines of one of the Napoleonic types, the one which aims to separate two opponents, 'perhaps the English and ourselves,' he added. And indeed, scarcely a year after Robert's death, a critic for whom he had a profound admiration and who obviously exercised great influence over his military ideas, M. Henry Bidou, said that Hindenburg's offensive in March, 1918, was 'the battle of one army massed to separate two opponents aligned against it, a maneuver in which Napoleon succeeded on the Apennines in 1796, but failed in Belgium in 1815.' A few minutes before we parted, Robert was drawing a comparison for me between battles and plays in which it is not always easy to know what the author intended or in which he changed his plan as he went along. Now, as far as the German offensive of 1918 is concerned, doubtless Robert would not agree with M. Bidou in interpreting it in this way; but other critics believe that it was Hindenburg's successful advance in the direction of Amiens, then his enforced halt, his success in Flanders and then another check which—accidentally, after all—made Amiens and then Bou-

logne objectives which he had not at first set before himself. And since everyone can rewrite a play to suit himself, some see in this offensive the announcement of a lightning-like march on Paris; others, merely random lunges in an effort to destroy the British army. And even if the orders given by the commander-in-chief contradict this or that theory, the critics will always have left the possibility of retorting, as Mounet-Sully did to Coquelin when assured by the latter that *Le Misanthrope* was not the sad, theatrical play he wished to make it (for Molière, according to the testimony of contemporaries, g[illegible] provoked laughter) [illegible].

"And about the airplanes," Gilberte remarked, "do you remember how he used to say—he had such apt expressions—that each army must be a hundred-eyed Argus? Alas, he did not live to see his statements substantiated." "Oh yes, he did," I replied. "At the Battle of the Somme, he knew very well that they first blinded the enemy by putting out his eyes, that is, by destroying his airplanes and captive balloons." "Yes, that is true." And during the years she had been living an exclusively intellectual life, she had become somewhat pedantic. "And how he used to maintain that people would come back to ancient methods! Do you know that the Mesopotamian expeditions in this war"—she must have read it at the time in Brichot's articles—"recall continually and without a single change Xenophon's retreat? And to go from the Tigris to the Euphrates, the British high command made use of *bellones*, long, narrow boats, local gondolas, which were already in use among the most ancient Chaldeans." These remarks conveyed to me the feeling of that stagnation of the past, which in certain places, by a sort of specific gravity, becomes indefinitely immobile, so that one finds it just as it was in former times. And I admit that, thinking of my reading at Balbec, not far away from Robert, I was greatly impressed—as when, in a French countryside, I came across a trench described by Mme. de Sévigné—or in the Orient, in connexion with the siege of Kut-el-Amara

("Kut-the-Emir, as we say Vaux-le-Vicomte and Boilleau-l'Evêque," the *curé* of Combray would have said if he had extended his thirst for etymology to the Oriental languages) to see reappear in the neighbourhood of Bagdad the name of Bassorah which is so frequently mentioned in *The Arabian Nights* and whither, in the days of the Caliphs, long before General Townshend, Sinbad the Sailor repairs each time to embark or disembark after leaving Bagdad or before returning there.

"There is one phase of war which he was beginning to grasp," I went on, "namely, that it is human, that people live it as they do a love or a hatred, and that it could be told like a novel and consequently that, if someone goes about repeating that strategy is a science, this does not help him at all to understand war, which is not strategic. The enemy does not know our plans any more than we know the end which the woman we love is pursuing—and it may be that we do not know these plans ourselves. In their offensive of March, 1918, did the Germans have as their objective the capture of Amiens? We do not know at all. Perhaps they did not know themselves and it may have been the outcome of their advance westward toward Amiens which determined their plan. And even supposing war to be scientific, one would still have to depict it as Elstir did the sea, in inverse ord[illegible] and beliefs which one corrects bit[illegible] the story of a life. M[illegible] is not strategic but medical instead, and subject to unforeseen accidents, such as the Russian revolution, which the clinician might have hoped to forestall."

Throughout this conversation, Gilberte had spoken of Robert with a deference that seemed to be addressed more to my old friend than to her deceased husband. She seemed to be saying to me, "I know how much you admired him. I assure you, I was able to appreciate what a superior being he was." And yet the love she certainly no longer felt for his memory was perhaps still the remote cause of certain

peculiar features of her present life. For example, Andrée was now her inseparable friend. Although the latter, thanks especially to her husband's talent and her own intelligence, was beginning to make her way, not, to be sure, into the Guermantes coterie, but into a social set infinitely more fashionable than the one she used to frequent, people were surprised that the Marquise de Saint-Loup should condescend to become her best friend. This seemed to be an indication of Gilberte's penchant for what she considered an artistic life, even at the cost of real damage to her social standing. That may be the correct explanation. However, another came to my mind, always impressed with the way in which the figures we see gathered together anywhere are usually the reflexion, or in one way or another the consequence of a prior grouping of other figures far removed from the lat- [illegible] symmetrical wi [illegible] er husband and Gilberte were to be seen together every evening, this was possibly because, many years before, the man who later became Andrée's husband was to be seen living with Rachel and then leaving her for Andrée. It is probable that Gilberte, living in a social world above and remote from theirs, knew nothing about this at the time. But she must have heard about it later, when Andrée had climbed, and she had descended, the social scale sufficiently for them to come within one another's vision. Then Gilberte must have felt strongly the prestige of the woman for whom Rachel had been abandoned by a man who must have had great charm, since Rachel had preferred him to Robert.

Thus, perhaps, the sight of Andrée recalled to Gilberte the youthful romance of her love for Saint-Loup and also inspired her with great respect for the woman that was still adored by a man who had aroused such a strong affection in the very Rachel who, she realised, had been more deeply loved by Robert than she herself had been. It may be, on the contrary, that these memories of the past had no part in Gilberte's predilection for this artistic couple and that one

should see in it, as with many people, simply the indulgence of two tendencies habitually inseparable in society women, to become well informed and to associate with people of much lower social standing. Perhaps Gilberte had forgotten Robert as completely as I had Albertine and, even if she knew it was Rachel that the artist had given up for Andrée, it may be that she never thought of this fact when she saw them and that it had never played any part in her liking for them. In order to decide whether my first explanation was, not merely possible but true, one would have had to obtain the testimony of those concerned, the only recourse left in such cases, provided they could bring to their confession clear insight and sincerity. But the former is seldom met with and the latter never.

"But how does it happen you come to such a crowded reception?" Gilberte asked me. "To run across you at a mad scramble like this doesn't fit in with my idea of you. I certainly would have expected to meet you anywhere else except at one of my aunt's big jamborees, since aunt it must be," she added with a touch of sarcasm, for, having become Mme. de Saint-Loup a little while before Mme Verdurin had married into the family, she considered herself to be one of the original Guermantes and to have been compromised by her uncle's marriage with someone so far below him as Mme. Verdurin, whom, it is true, she had heard ridiculed on countless occasions by members of the family in her presence, while of course it was only behind her back that they had talked of the *mésalliance* Saint-Loup had contracted in marrying her. Moreover, she affected all the more disdain for this "off-colour" aunt because the Princesse de Guermantes ... of perversity which impels intelli... of conduct, ... s of ... ewly

the past, in order to try to give ... acquired elegance, was fond of saying, when she spoke of Gilberte, "I assure you she is not a new acquaintance to me. I knew the girl's mother very well; why, she was a close

friend of my cousin, Mme. de Marsantes, and it was at my house she met Gilberte's father. As for poor Saint-Loup, I knew his entire family long before that; why, his uncle used to be an intimate friend of mine at La Raspelière." "You see, the Verdurins weren't bohemians at all," people used to say to me after hearing the Princesse de Guermantes talk in this way. "They have been friends of Mme. de Saint-Loup's family from away back." I was perhaps the only one who knew (through my grandfather) that it was quite true the Verdurins were not bohemians, but that was not exactly because they had known Odette. But it is easy to dress up stories of a past that no one any longer remembers, like tales of travel to countries no one has ever visited. "Well then," Gilberte concluded, "since you do occasionally come out of your 'ivory tower', wouldn't informal little gatherings at my house, to which I would invite congenial spirits, be more to your liking? Big affairs like this were not made for you. I saw you talking with my Aunt Oriane, who may have all the fine qualities one could wish but who, I think you will agree, it is not unfair to say is not one of the intellectual élite." I could not explain to Gilberte the thoughts that had been going through my mind for the past hour, but it occurred to me that, when it came to mere entertainment, she might furnish opportunities for pleasant diversion which I did not, as a matter of fact, believe I should find in discussing literature with the Duchesse de Guermantes any more than with Mme. de Saint-Loup. It is true that I intended to resume the very next day my solitary existence, but with a definite purpose th[illegible] would not even let [illegible] luring my working [illegible] literary task took precedence over the duty to be courteous or even kind. Doubtless the friends who had not seen me for such a long time and who had just met me again and thought me in good health once more would be insistent. They would come with their importunate demands when the toil of the day—or of their lives—was done or interrupted, with the same need of

me as I used to feel for Saint-Loup, because, as I had already noticed at Combray when my parents scolded me just after I had, unbeknownst to them, made most commendable resolutions, the subjective chronometers allotted to men are not all regulated to keep the same time; one strikes the hour of rest while the other is summoning to work; one announces the moment for the judge to pronounce sentence long after the guilty one has heard the call to repentance and reformation. But to those who might come to see me or who might send for me, I would have the courage to reply that I had an imperative and vitally important engagement with myself for certain essential matters which I must learn about without delay. And, although there is little connexion between our true self and the other, on account of the identical name and common body the self-denial which leads one to sacrifice the easiest duties and even pleasures is mistaken by others for selfishness. And if I was going to live apart from the people who would complain of not seeing me, was it not precisely so that I might devote myself to them—more thoroughly than I could have done in their company—seek to reveal them to themselves, to arrive at their true natures? What would it profit me to waste my evenings for years to come in sending after the disappearing echo of their remarks the equally empty sound of my own, for the fruitless pleasure of social contacts in which any penetrating meditation is impossible? Was it not more worth while that I should study the gestures they made, the words they uttered, their lives, their natures, and endeavour to plot the curve and induce the general law? *Unfortunately, I should have to* [illegible]

through excessive politeness it impels us to sacrifice to others, not only our pleasure but our duty, when, putting ourselves in the place of another, our duty, of whatever
that of helping out in the rear when one could be of no
ice at the front—appears to us as our own pleasure,

reality it is not. And far from considering myself unfortunate, as some of the greatest men have done, in having to live without friends or social converse, I understood that the inspirational forces which one expends in friendship are a sort of blind door to an individual friendship which leads nowhere, and that these forces are diverted from a truth toward which they might have led us. But after all, when periods of relaxation and companionship became necessary, I realised that, in place of the intellectual conversations which society folk believe helpful to writers, slight love affairs with young girls in the first bloom of youth would furnish a select pabulum which I might, when strictly necessary, allow to my imagination, like the famous horse that was fed exclusively on roses! What I suddenly wished for all over again was what I had dreamed of at Balbec when I s. [illegible] t, b [illegible] e to endeavour to find again the same young girls for whom I felt at that moment such a strong desire. The action of the years, which had worked such changes in all the human beings I had seen that day, and even in Gilberte, had surely transformed all the young girls who were still living—and would have transformed Albertine, had she not died—into women far too different from my recollection of them. I suffered from an inner yearning to find and be with them once more, for time, which changes people, does not alter the recollection we have of them. Nothing is more painful than this contrast between the changes in people and the unchangeableness of our remembrance of them when we realise that something which has retained such freshness in our memory cannot possibly still have any in actual life, that we cannot draw near outwardly to what, in our inner thoughts, seems to us so beautiful and kindles in us, notwithstanding, such a strongly individual longing to see it again. This powerful desire which memory aroused in me for those young girls seen years before, I realised I could not hope to gratify unless by seeking to find it in someone of that same age—

in other words, in someone else than them. Often I had had a suspicion that what seems peculiar to someone we desire ssage of time was s, since, after the urge to seek, in place of the young girls I had known, others now enjoying the youth they had at that time. Moreover, there is more in *this than merely an awakening of our fleshly desires, which* does not correspond to any reality because it takes no account of the time that has passed. There came over me at times a wish that, by some miracle, my grandmother or Albertine, still alive (contrary to what I had believed) might come into the room where I was. I thought I saw them, my heart leaped toward them. Only I forgot one thing, that if they really had been alive, Albertine would now look about as Mme. Cottard did to me at Balbec, and my grandmother, being more than ninety-five years old, would by no means rejoice my sight with that beautiful, calm, smiling countenance with which I even now still pictured her to myself as arbitrarily as we put a beard on God the Father or as they were accustomed in the seventeenth century to represent the *heroes of Homer in all the trappings of a noble lord, with*out regard to their antiquity. I looked at Gilberte and did not think to myself, "I would like to see her again," but I told her it would always give me pleasure to be invited by her to meet some young girls, but without harbouring the intention of asking anything more of them than to reawaken years—and mayhap, ust as Elstir loved to is wife, the Venetian beauty which he had so often reproduced in his paintings, I allowed myself the excuse of being attracted by a certain æsthetic selfishness toward beautiful women who might cause me suffering and I had a certain feeling of idolatry for the future Gilbertes, Duchesses de Guermantes and Albertines whom I might meet *and from whom it seemed to me* I might get inspiration, like a sculptor strolling about

beautiful old marble statuary. I ought, however, to have remembered that prior to each of those attachments there was my feeling for the mystery which pervaded them and that therefore, instead of asking Gilberte to introduce me to some young girls, I would have done better to go to places where we are not connected with them in any way, where we feel some insuperable barrier between them and us, where, two paces from them on the beach, going to bathe, one feels separated from them by the impossible. It was in this way that my feeling for the mysterious had been able to attach itself successively to Gilberte, the Duchesse de Guermantes, Albertine and so many others. To be sure, the unknown and almost unknowable had become the common, the familiar, a matter of indifference or a source of pain, but always retaining a certain charm from what it had once been. And to tell the truth, as on the calendars the letter carrier brings us to get his New Year's gift, there was not a year of my life which had not had as its frontispiece or inserted among its days the picture of a woman I had ardently desired, a picture that was often all the more arbitrary because sometimes I had never seen the woman, as, for instance, Mme. Putbus's maid, Mlle. d'Orgeville or some young girl whose name I had seen in the society column of a newspaper amid the bevy of charming dancers. I sensed her to be beautiful, lost my heart to her and created for her an imaginary body which dominated with its full height a landscape of the region where I had read in *L'Annuaire des Châteaux* her family's estate was situated. In the case of the women I had come to know, this setting was at least double. Each of them stood out prominently at a different point in my life, rising like a protecting local deity, first, from the midst of one of those dream-world landscapes which, side by side, made a checkerboard of my life and in which I had become fond of imagining her; secondly, seen with the eyes of memory in the settings where I had known her, which she recalled to me by fixed association—for even though our life be a roving one, our memory is sedentary

and, no matter how ceaselessly we may rush about, our recollections, riveted to the places from which we tear ourselves away, continue to lead their stay-at-home existence there, like the temporary friends a traveller makes in a town and has to abandon when he leaves because it is there that they, who do not go away, will end their journey and their lives, as if he were still there, by the church, before the door, under the trees of the promenade. Thus it was that the shadow of Gilberte lay, not only before a church in the Ile-de-France where I had pictured her to myself, but also on the path of a park along the Méséglise way, and the [illegible] where [illegible] golden [illegible] second person, the one born not of desire but of memory, was not in the case of either of these women the only one. For I had known each of them under diverse circumstances and at different times, when she was quite another person for me and I myself was a different being, immersed in dreams of another colour. Now, the law which had governed the [illegible] the [illegible] y childhood, for example, was by magnetic attraction centered around Combray, and everything that had to do with the Duchesse de Guermantes who was shortly going to invite me to luncheon centered around a very different sensitive being; there were several Duchesses de Guermantes (as there had been several Mme. Swanns since "the lady in pink") separated by the colourless ether of the years, and I could no more leap from one to the other than if this had required my stepping from one planet to another across the [illegible] with neither Mme. de Forcheville nor Mme. de Guermantes,

I could not have affirmed—for that would have transported me into another world—that one was not a different person from the Duchesse de Guermantes, descendant of Geneviève de Brabant, and the other a different person from "the lady in pink," had not a well educated man within me assured me of it with the same authority with which a scientist might have assured me that a milky way of nebulæ was due to the segmentation of one single star. In like manner Gilberte

me have some friends such as she had once been to me. Seeing her, I no longer meditated on the part that my admiration for Bergotte—but a Bergotte once more for me merely the author of his books—had played in my love (which likewise she had forgotten) without recalling (except in rare and entirely isolated impressions) my emotion at being introduced to the man, my disappointment, my astonishment over his conversation, in the drawing-room with the white furs, filled with violets, where so many lamps were brought in very early and placed on so many different consoles. All the memories that made up the earliest Mlle. Swann were, in fact, eliminated from the Gilberte of the present moment, held very far away by the magnetic forces of another universe, centering around a phrase of Bergotte's of which they had come to be an integral part, and saturated with the fragrance of hawthorn blossoms. The fragmentary Gilberte of to-day listened to my request with a smile. Then she looked serious and began to think it over, seeming to be searching for something in her mind. And I was glad of this, for it prevented her from noticing a group not far from us which it assuredly would not have been pleasant for her to see. The Duchesse de Guermantes was there, engaged in lively conversation with a "fright" of an old woman whom I gazed at, utterly unable to guess who she was; I had no idea whatsoever. "How strange to see Rachel here," Bloch whispered to me as he passed at this moment. That magic name instantly broke the spell which had given

to Saint-Loup's mistress the unfamiliar form of that revolting old woman and then I recognised her perfectly. I have already mentioned how in just this way, as soon as I was told the name of someone whose face was unfamiliar to me, the enchantment ceased and I recognised him. There was one man, however, whom I could not recognise even when they told me his name and I thought it must be someone else with the same name, for he bore no sort of resemblance to the man whom I had not only known in former years but had met again more recently. And yet it was he, only whiter and stouter, and he had shaved his moustache and this had sufficed to make him lose his identity. But to come back to Rachel—it was indeed she (now a famous actress and intending to recite some verses of Musset and La Fontaine later on during this reception) who was talking at this moment with Gilberte's aunt, the Duchesse de Guermantes. Now, the sight of Rachel could not possibly be very agreeable to Gilberte and I was still more annoyed both to learn that she was going to recite some poetry and also to note her intimacy with the Duchess The latter, too long conscious of occupying the foremost social position in Paris (while failing to realise that such a position exists only in the minds of those who believe in it and that many newcomers, if they did not see her anywhere or read her name in the account of any fashionable function, would, in fact, believe that she had no social standing whatsoever) except for formal calls as few and infrequent as possible, no longer visited the Faubourg Saint-Germain, which, she said, "bored her to death," and, on the other hand, indulged her fancy for lunching with this or that actress whom she considered "delicious."

When it came to Balthy and Mistinguett, whom she thought "adorable," the Duchess still hesitated, for fear of a scene with M. de Guermantes, but she frankly adopted Rachel as a friend. The younger generations concluded from this that the Duchesse de Guermantes, despite her name, must be some half-caste who had never been really

high-class. It is true that, in the case of some sovereigns, for whose intimacy two other women of high position were also contending, Mme. de Guermantes still went to the trouble of entertaining them at luncheon. But in the first place, they come seldom, they know some people of no social standing, and the Duchess, through the Guermantes superstitious attachment to the old court ceremonial (for, while well bred people bored her, she set great store by good breeding) made the invitations read, "His Majesty has ordered the Duchesse de Guermantes, . . . has deigned," and so forth. And the newer social strata, ignorant of these formulas, had just so much the lower opinion of the Duchess' standing. As far as the latter was concerned, her intimacy with Rachel might indicate that we had been mistaken when we believed her to be hypocritical and untruthful in condemning high society and when we thought that, in refusing to call on Mme. de Sainte-Euverte, she did so, not so much on account of the latter's lack of intelligence as because she was a social climber, the Duchess calling her "stupid" only because she made it obvious that she was socially ambitious, not yet having reached her goal. But this intimacy with Rachel might also be a proof that the Duchess's intelligence was in reality mediocre, unsatisfied and, late in life when she was tired of fashionable society, eager for vital experiences because of complete ignorance of the true intellectual realities and a touch of the capricious spirit that sometimes leads a woman of high rank to say to herself "What fun it will be!" and then to end her evening in a deadly, tiresome manner, getting up enough energy to go and rouse someone, remain a while by the bedside in her evening wrap and finally, finding nothing to say and noticing that it is very late, go home to bed.

It should be added that a strong antipathy which the versatile Duchess had recently conceived for Gilberte may very well have caused her to take pleasure in admitting Rachel into her circle; besides which, this gave her an opportunity to proclaim one of the Guermantes maxims, to the

effect that the family was too numerous for its members to espouse one *another's quarrels (almost too numerous to go* into mourning)—an independence of tribal obligations which had been accentuated by the policy it had been necessary to adopt toward M. de Charlus who, if they had followed his lead, would have embroiled them with everybody. As for Rachel, if she really had gone to a great deal of trouble to cultivate relations with the Duchesse de Guermantes (an attitude which the Duchess had not been able to detect under an affectation of disdain and intentionally discourteous acts which made the latter only the more anxious to continue her efforts, enhancing her good opinion of an actress so little disposed to curry favour with those socially above her) that was doubtless due in a general way to the fascination *fashionable folk exercise after a certain time on even the* most hardened bohemians, parallel to the attraction bohemians have for society folk, an action and reaction that correspond in the sphere of politics to the reciprocal curiosity and desire for an alliance felt by nations that have been at war with one another. But Rachel's friendly inclination may have had a more special reason. It was in Mme. de Guermantes' house, at the hands of Mme. de Guermantes herself, that she had, some years before, suffered her most terrible humiliation. Rachel had gradually not forgotten but forgiven *it, but the peculiar prestige it had conferred on the* Duchess in her eyes was never to be effaced. The conversation from which I was anxious to divert Gilberte's attention was luckily interrupted, for the lady of the house came for Rachel, whose time to recite had arrived and, leaving the Duchess, she soon appeared on the platform.

* * *

Meanwhile, at the opposite end of Paris, a very different spectacle was taking place. Berma had sent out some invitations to a tea in *honour of her daughter and son-in-law*. But the guests were in no hurry to arrive. Having learned that Rachel was to recite some poetry at the Princesse de

Guermantes' (which scandalised Berma, a great artist in whose eyes Rachel was still the prostitute who, because Saint-Loup bought her stage gowns, was permitted to have a supernumerary part in plays in which she, Berma, held the principal rôle—and the scandal seemed all the greater because the report had spread through Paris that, while the invitations had gone out in the name of the Princesse de Guermantes, it was really Rachel who was receiving at the Princess's) Berma had written again insistently to some of her special friends not to fail to come to her tea, for she knew them to be also friends of the Princesse de Guermantes, whom they had known as Mme. Verdurin. But the hours passed and no one arrived at Berma's. Bloch, when asked to go there, had answered ingenuously, "No, I'd rather go to the Princesse de Guermantes'." Unfortunately, that was what everyone had decided in his own mind. Berma, afflicted with an incurable disease that allowed her to go out very little socia[illegible] when, in order [illegible] ous requireme[illegible] health and indolent, could not satisfy, she had gone back to the stage. She knew she was shortening her life but she wished to please her daughter, to whom she brought home large honoraria, and her son-in-law, whom she detested but humoured for, knowing how her daughter adored him, she feared that if she incurred his displeasure, he might, out of spite, prevent her from seeing her child. The latter, while not actually cruel, being secretly loved by the physician attending her mother, had allowed herself to be persuaded that these performances of *Phèdre* were not very dangerous for the sick woman. She had in a way forced the doctor to say so, having retained only that part of his reply and ignored the accompanying objections; he had, in fact, said that he saw no great harm in Berma's giving these performances because he realised that in this way he would please the young woman of whom he was enamoured—perhaps also through ignorance, because he likewise knew

the disease to be incurable anyhow, and it is easy to reconcile ourselves to shortening an invalid's martyrdom when the action that is destined to have this effect is of benefit to us; perhaps also he had the stupid notion that it would please Berma and therefore should do her good, a stupid notion that seemed to him substantiated when, having received a box from Berma's daughter and her husband and having abandoned all his patients for the occasion, he had found the actress as remarkably full of life on the stage as she seemed fatally ill when in her own home. And it is true that our habits make it to a very large extent possible for us and even for our constitutions to adjust to an existence that would seem at first sight to be impossible. Who has not seen an old ring-master, in spite of a weak heart, go through all the acrobatic maneuvers which one would not have believed his heart could stand for one instant? Berma was just as much a veteran of the stage and her system was so perfectly adapted to its exigencies that, by husbanding her strength in a manner imperceptible to the audience, she could give the illusion of good health, impaired only by a purely imaginary nervous ailment. After the scene of the declaration to Hippolyte, although she sensed the terrible night she [illegible]
with all t[illegible]
ever. Sh[illegible]
to bring her daughter the large bank notes which, as a playful trick of a former chorus girl, she still had the habit of tucking away in her stocking, whence she withdrew them proudly, hoping for a smile or a kiss. Unfortunately, this money merely permitted the son-in-law and daughter to redecorate their residence adjoining hers, to the tune of
[illegible] p the sleep of which the
[illegible] They "did over" each
[illegible] hion or to suit the taste
of M. de A. or M. de X., whom they were expecting to entertain. And Berma, realising that the sleep that would have eased her pain had fled, resigned herself to lying awake,

not without a secret scorn for these elegances which were hastening her end and making her last days unbearable. It was doubtless partly for this reason that she scorned them, a natural feeling of resentment against something that is injuring us and which we are powerless to prevent. But it was also because, conscious of the genius within her and having learned at an early age the meaninglessness of all these decrees of fashion, she had, as far as she herself was concerned, remained true to the tradition she had always respected and of which she was the incarnation, which led [illegible] hirty years [illegible] ashionable [illegible] ute Berma had once known. Berma, it is true, was no better than her daughter, who had acquired from her by heredity and by the contagion of her example (rendered all the more effective by a very natural admiration) her selfishness, her pitiless sarcasm and her unconscious cruelty. Only Berma had sacrificed all that to her daughter and had thereby purified herself of it. Furthermore, even if her daughter had not had workmen continually in her house, she would still have exhausted her mother, just as the relentless, light-hearted magnetic forces of youth exhaust the old and the sick who wear themselves out trying to keep up the pace. Every day there was some new luncheon engagement and Berma would have been considered selfish to deprive her daughter of it or even not to be present herself, when they had counted on the wonder-working presence of the famous mother to overcome the reluctance of some new acquaintances who had to be coaxed. They offered her as an "attraction" to these same acquaintances for a party outside the home, to shew them some special attention. And the poor mother, seriously engaged in her *tête-à-tête* with death, already in her veins, was obliged to rise early and go out. More than that—since at that time Réjane, in all the splendour of her talent, had given some performances abroad which had met with enormous success, the son-in-law felt that Berma should not let

herself be outshone, was determined that the family should reap the same abundant glory and forced Berma to undertake tours on which she had to be given morphine injections, which might have caused her death on account of the condition of her kidneys. This same drawing power of fashion, social prestige and life had acted like a suction pump on the day of the Princesse de Guermantes' reception and had drawn off, with the force of a pneumatic machine, even the most devoted members of Berma's circle, leaving her house, by contrast and in consequence, absolutely empty and dead. One solitary young man had come, uncertain whether Berma's tea might not also be a brilliant affair. When Berma saw the hour pass and understood that everybody had deserted her, she had tea served and they sat down around the table, but as if to a funeral repast. There was nothing now in Berma's countenance to recall the photograph which, one evening in Mid-Lent, had stirred me so deeply. She had, as the common people say, death in her face. This time she did, indeed, resemble a marble statue of the Erectheum. Her hardened arteries being already half petrified, long, narrow, sculpturesque ribbons of mineral-like rigidity could be discerned traversing her cheeks. Her dying eyes lived relatively by contrast with the horrible ossified mask and shone faintly like a serpent asleep among the rocks. Meanwhile the young man, having sat down at the table out of politeness, was continually looking at the time, feeling drawn toward the brilliant affair at the Guermantes'. Berma did not have a word of reproach for the friends who had deserted her and who naïvely hoped she would not know they had gone to the other reception. She merely muttered, "A woman like Rachel giving an affair at the Princesse de Guermantes'—you have to come to Paris to see a thing like that!" And she ate forbidden cakes in silence and with solemn slowness, as though performing some funeral rite. The tea was all the gloomier because the son-in-law was furious that Rachel, whom he and his wife knew very well, had not invited them. His spleen was only increased

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when the young guest said that he had received an invitation and that he knew Rachel so well that, if he left at once for the Guermantes', he could ask her to invite the society-mad young couple even now at the last minute. But Berma's daughter knew too well what a low opinion her mother had of Rachel and that it would break her heart to have her daughter solicit an invitation of the former prostitute. And so she told the young man and her husband that it was out of the question. But she took her revenge while they were at table by sulking over the good time she was missing and indicating that she was vexed at her mother for spoiling her fun. The latter pretended not to notice her daughter's pouting face and from time to time, in a dying voice, addressed an amiable remark to the young man, the only guest who had come. But soon the gale that was sweeping everything toward the Guermantes', and had even carried me there, got the best of him and he rose and took his departure, leaving Phèdre—or death, it was not very clear which it was—to eat the rest of the funeral cakes with her daughter and son-in-law.

* * *

The conversation Gilberte and I were having was interrupted by the sudden sound of Rachel's voice. She had adopted a clever method of presentation, one which implied that the selection she was reciting formed part of a situation which had already been going on and of which we were hearing only a fragment, as though the *artiste*, while walking along a road, had happened for a few moments to come within range of our hearing. Nevertheless, her listeners were amazed to see this woman, before she had uttered a sound, crouch down, bending her knees inward and holding out her arms as if cradling an invisible child in them, and suddenly start to recite some well known verses in a supplicating tone of voice.

The announcement of a poem almost everyone knew had pleased the audience. But when they saw Rachel cast

despairing glances all about her before beginning to recite, lift up her hands in entreaty and utter a moan, as it were, with each word, everyone felt ill at ease and almost shocked at this display of emotion. No one had ever imagined that a poetry recitation could be anything like that. Gradually one gets used to (that is to say, one forgets) the first feeling of embarrassment, one notices the good points and mentally compares different ways of reciting, concluding that this feature is an improvement and that one not so good. In the same way in a simple lawsuit, when one sees a lawyer come forward, raise one arm with his barrister's gown falling from it, and begin in a threatening tone, one hesitates to look at one's neighbours, feeling that it is grotesque but perhaps, after all, it is magnificent and so one waits to be sure. Rachel's audience looked at one another, not knowing what expression to assume; some ill-bred young people smothered a wild desire to laugh; everyone stealthily cast a furtive glance at his neighbour, just as at a fashionable dinner, when you find at your place a strange implement, lobster fork, sugar sifter and so on, the purpose and use of which are unfamiliar, you watch some guest more of an authority on such matters, who you hope will make use of his first and thereby give you an example to imitate. We act in the same manner also when someone quotes a line we do not know but try to pretend we do and so, as a matter of courtesy, like allowing someone else to enter a door first, we let him, as the better informed, have the pleasure of saying who wrote it. In much the same way each one, listening to the actress, waited with lowered head and watchful eye for someone else to take the initiative of laughing or criticising, weeping or applauding. Mme. de Forcheville, who had come back expressly from Guermantes (whence, as we shall see later, the Duchess had been virtually banished) had assumed an air of critical scrutiny, almost of downright disapproval, either to shew that she was a good judge of such matters and was not there merely as a society butterfly, or from hostility toward people less versed in literature who

have spoken to her of something else, or through concentration of her whole being in an effort to determine whether she liked it—or, perhaps, because she found it interesting but did not fancy, at any rate, the way of reciting certain lines. This attitude, it would seem, ought rather to have been assumed by the Princesse de Guermantes, but since it was in her own house and since, having become as miserly as she was rich, she had decided to give Rachel merely five roses, she led the applause. She stimulated enthusiasm and created favourable sentiment by continually uttering exclamations of delight. In that only was she the Mme. Verdurin of the old days, for she had the air of listening to the poetry for her own pleasure, as though she had wanted someone to come and recite to her all alone and five hundred people had happened to be there and so she had given them permission to come secretly, as it were, and be present while she enjoyed herself. Meanwhile I noticed—but without my pride being flattered, for she had become old and ugly—that Rachel was casting significant glances at me, though somewhat guardedly. During her entire recitation, she let a veiled, penetrating smile flicker in her eyes like bait to attract the favourable response which perhaps she hoped would come from me. In the meantime some old ladies, unaccustomed to poetical recitations, said to a neighbour, "Did you notice that?" alluding to the actress's tragic, solemn pantomime, which they did not know what to think of. The Duchesse de Guermantes sensed the slight wavering and turned the tide of victory by exclaiming, "Splendid!" right in the middle of a poem which perhaps she thought was finished. More than one guest then made a point of endorsing this exclamation with an approving look and a nod, to shew perhaps, not so much their appreciation of the recitation as their relations with the Duchess. When the poem was ended, as we were very near Rachel, I heard her thank Mme. de Guermantes and at the same time, taking advantage of my being at the Duchess's side, she turned toward me with a gracious greeting. I then understood (un-

like the impassioned glances of M. de Vaugoubert's son, which I had interpreted as a greeting from a man who mistook me for someone else) what I had believed to indicate an amorous desire on Rachel's part had been merely a restrained attempt to secure recognition and a greeting from me. I responded with a bow and a smile. "I am sure he does not recognise me," the actress said to the Duchess, with an air of mock humility. "Indeed I do," I replied with emphasis. "I recognised you instantly."

While this woman was reciting the most beautiful lines of La Fontaine with so much assurance and thinking all the while, through kindness, stupidity or embarrassment, only of the difficulty of getting a sign of recognition from me, during the same beautiful lines Bloch had been thinking only of how he might make ready, immediately the recitation should come to an end, to rush forward, like a besieged party attempting a sally, and trampling, if not the bodies at any rate the feet of his neighbours, come up and congratulate the monologuist, either through a mistaken conception of duty or because of a desire to attract attention to himself.

"It was very fine!" he said to Rachel and, having spoken these simple words and gratified his desire, he turned back and made so much noise regaining his seat that Rachel had to wait more than five minutes before reciting the second poem When she had finished this one, *Les Deux Pigeons*, Mme. de Monrieuval came up to Mme de Saint-Loup and, knowing her to be well read but forgetting that she had her father's subtle, sarcastic mind, asked, "That's La Fontaine's fable, isn't it?"—thinking she recognised it but not absolutely sure, because she was not familiar with La Fontaine's fables and, besides, thought they were intended for children and not to be recited at social functions. To make such a hit, the good woman thought the actress had doubtless paraphrased some of La Fontaine's fables. And Gilberte, impassive up till then, encouraged her in this opinion without meaning to do so for, disliking Rachel and intending to

that, with a delivery like hers, there was nothing left of the fables, she said it with the excessive subtlety of shading which used to characterise her father and which always left the naive listener in doubt as to what he really meant. More modern in general, although Swann's daughter—like a duckling hatched by a hen—she was rather Wordsworthian and contented herself with saying, "I consider it very touching, delightfully sentimental." But in replying to Mme. de Monrieuval, she used this fantastic formula of Swann's which used to mislead people who take everything literally: "One-fourth is the interpreter's own invention, one-fourth is sheer madness, one-fourth makes no sense and the remainder is La Fontaine." This allowed Mme. de Monrieuval to maintain that what one had just heard was not La Fontaine's *Les Deux Pigeons* but an adaptation, of which at most one-fourth was from La Fontaine; this astonished nobody, because of the extraordinary ignorance of that audience.

One of Bloch's friends having arrived late, Bloch had the thrill of asking him if he had ever heard Rachel and then giving him an extraordinary description of her way of reciting, exaggerating the account and suddenly finding in reproducing and interpreting to someone else this modernist style of delivery a peculiar pleasure he had by no means experienced in listening to it. Then, with a forced show of feeling and in a falsetto voice, as though proclaiming her talent, he again congratulated Rachel and presented his friend, who professed unbounded admiration; Rachel, who was now acquainted with ladies of high society and unconsciously imitated them, replied, "I am greatly flattered and honoured by your appreciation." Bloch's friend inquired what she thought of Berma. "Poor woman, it seems she is in desperate want. She had a certain—I won't say talent because it was not at bottom real talent, she liked only the ultra-tragic; but after all, she had her usefulness, no doubt about that; she acted in a rather lifelike manner and, besides, she was good-hearted and generous and ruined herself for others. She has not earned a penny for a long time because

the public doesn't care at all for her style of acting. But," she added with a laugh, "I should explain that I was too young, of course, to see her act except at the very last, when I wasn't old enough to understand." "Then she did not *recite poetry very well?" Bloch's friend ventured*, to flatter Rachel, who replied, "Good heavens! she never could recite a single line; it was prose, Chinese, Volapuk, anything you like, but *not poetry*. *But I ought to explain that, of course*, I heard her very seldom and only toward the last," she added, in order to make herself out younger than she was. "But I have been told she was no better in earlier years, quite the contrary."

I was coming to realise that the passage of time does not necessarily bring about progress in the arts And just as many an author of the seventeenth century who knew nothing of the French Revolution or the discoveries of science or the World War, may be superior to many a writer of the present day and just as it may even be that Fagon

and time, by making her stand out so prominently together with Elstir, had consecrated her genius.

It is not at all surprising that Saint-Loup's former mistress should speak disparagingly of Berma. She would have done it when she was young. Even if she would not have done *it then, she would* have done it *now*. Let a society woman of the highest intelligence and kindliest disposition become an actress, display great talent in her new occupation and meet with unbroken success, if you are in her company some time after, you will be surprised to hear her use, not her own style of language, but the language of common actresses, their peculiar coarseness toward one another, everything that "thirty years behind the scenes" add to a human being as they roll over him. Rachel merely behaved in the same manner without having come from polite society.

Toward the latter part of her life, Mme. de Gu

had felt new interests stirring within her. The social world had nothing more to teach her. That she occupied the foremost place in society was, as we have seen, as obvious to her as is the height of the blue sky above the earth. She did not think she needed to buttress a position she considered impregnable. On the other hand, when she read books and went to the theatre, she felt a desire to follow further this reading and these theatrical representations; just as formerly in the narrow little garden the most select elements of the fashionable world used to gather familiarly to sip orangeade among the perfumed breezes of the evening and the clouds of pollen and keep alive in her the liking for aristocratic society, in similar manner now a different intellectual hunger made her want to know the causes of this or that literary controversy, become acquainted with her favourite authors, meet some actresses. Her weary mind demanded a new sustenance. To gain the acquaintance of authors and actresses, she made advances to women with whom in former years she would not have been willing to exchange calling cards and who exploited their intimacy with the director of this or that revue, in the hope of getting the Duchess to attend. The first actress she invited thought herself the only one in a remarkable *milieu*, which seemed more commonplace to the second when she saw who had preceded her. The Duchess, because on certain evenings she received some members of royalty, thought there had been no change in her social standing; but in reality she, the only "blue blood" of purest stock, born a Guermantes and able to sign "Guermantes—Guermantes," when she did not sign "Duchesse de Guermantes," regarded even by her sisters-in-law as something precious above all else, as a Moses rescued from the waters of the Nile, a Christ escaped into Egypt, a Louis XVII delivered from the Temple, the purest of the pure, now making a social sacrifice doubtless through that hereditary need of intellectual nourishment which had caused the social decline of Mme. de Villeparisis—she had herself become a

Mme. de Villeparisis, at whose house women solicitous of their social standing dreaded meeting certain men and women and whom the younger generation, taking note of the situation as it was *without knowing what had gone before*, believed to be a Guermantes of an inferior vintage, of a poorer harvest, a *déclassée* Guermantes. In the new circles she frequented, having changed less than she thought she had, she continued to believe that to be easily bored was proof of intellectual superiority, but she expressed it in a rough way that gave her voice a certain harshness. When I mentioned Brichot to her, she said, "He sure has bored me for the past twenty years" And when Mme. de Cambremer said, "Read over again what Schopenhauer says about music," she called our [illegible] mently, "'Read over a [illegible] a bit too strong." At [illegible] one of the forms of the Guermantes wit.

"You can say what you like, that is splendid; it has style and character; it's intelligent. No one ever recited poetry like that," said the Duchess, speaking of Rachel and afraid lest Gilberte run her down. The latter moved away toward another group to avoid a conflict with her aunt who, be it added, made only very commonplace remarks about Rachel. But since even the best writers often cease producing at the approach of old age or, after excessive production, have no more talent, society women can be excused if after a certain time they cease to have any wit. Swann could no longer find in the rigid mind of the Duchesse de Guermantes the suppleness of the young Princesse des Laumes. Late in life, wearied by the slightest effort, Mme. de Guermantes made an enormous number of stupid remarks. It is true that every now and then, and many times in the course of this *very reception*, she became again the woman I had known and discussed society topics cleverly. But along with that it frequently happened that her sparkling conversation which, with her handsome glance, had for so many years held

intellectual sway over the most eminent men in Paris, still scintillated, but in a vacuum, so to speak. When the moment came to put in a clever remark, she stopped for as many seconds as formerly, seemed to hesitate and then to bring forth something, but the quip she launched amounted to nothing. How few people, however, remarked this; the continuance of the manner made them believe in the survival of the substance, as happens to people who, superstitiously attached to a certain make of pastry, continue to have their *petits fours* sent to them from the same concern without noticing that they have become abominable. Even during the war, the Duchess had shewn signs of this senescence. If someone mentioned the word "culture," her face would light up and she would stop him, smile and ejaculate "KKKKultur," at which the friends would laugh, thinking they saw there the Guermantes wit. And indeed it was the same mould, the same intonation, the same smile which had formerly delighted Bergotte—who, for that matter, had he been alive, would likewise have retained his unfinished sentences, his interjections, his dashes, his epithets, but with nothing to say. Newcomers, however, were astonished and sometimes, if they had not happened on a day when she was amusing and in full possession of her faculties, they would say, "How silly she is!" The Duchess, moreover, took care to reserve her less elegant manners for certain occasions and not to display them before those members of her family who invested her with an aristocratic halo. If in her capacity as patron of the arts she had invited a cabinet minister or a painter to the theatre and he naïvely inquired whether her sister-in-law or her husband was in the audience, the really diffident Duchess would reply cavalierly, with a haughty show of audacity, "I have no idea at all. The moment I leave my house, I no longer know what my relatives are doing. As far as politicians and artists are concerned, I am a widow." In this manner she forestalled for the over-zealous *parvenu* the possibility of a rebuke—and for herself

a reprimand—from Mme.* de Marsantes or the Duc de Guermantes.

I mentioned to Mme. de Guermantes that I had met M. de Charlus. She considered him farther "gone" than he really was, for society folk draw distinctions in the matter of intelligence, not only between different people in whom it is practically equal but even in the same person at different periods of his life. And then she added, "He always was the very image of my mother-in-law and now the likeness is even more striking." There was nothing extraordinary about this resemblance. It is a well known fact that some women project themselves, so to speak, into another human being with the utmost accuracy, only making a mistake as to sex. But one cannot say about this error "*felix culpa,*" for sex reacts on personality and in a man femininity becomes affectation, reticence, sensitiveness and so on. Whatever one may say, in his face, even if covered with a beard, in his cheeks, bloated though they may be beneath the side-whiskers, there are certain lines that would be found to duplicate his mother's portrait. There is scarcely a single aged Charlus who is not like some old ruin in which, to one's surprise, one can distinguish under the thick layers of fat and rice powder some fragments of a beautiful woman in her eternal youthfulness.

"I can't tell you how glad I am to see you," the Duchess went on. "Goodness! when did I see you last?" "Calling on Mme. d'Agrigente, where I often used to meet you." "Naturally so, my dear fellow, for I went there often, since Basin was in love with her at that time. I was always to be found most frequently at the home of his sweetheart of the moment, because he would say to me, 'Don't fail to go and call on her.' At bottom, it always seemed to me a bit indelicate to send me to make a sort of bread-and-butter call as soon as he had had his fill. I accustomed myself to it rather quickly, but the most annoying thing about it was

*The "M. de Marsantes" of the French text is probably a misprint for the "sister-in-law" just mentioned.—*F.A.B.*

that I had to keep up my connexion after he had broken off his, which always recalled to my mind Victor Hugo's line:

Emporte le bonheur et laisse-moi l'ennui.

Just as in the poem, I went into it nevertheless with a smile, but really it wasn't fair, he should have granted me the right to be inconstant at least toward his mistresses for, accumulating all his unclaimed articles, I finally reached a point where I no longer had an afternoon to myself. Nevertheless, those days seem sweet compared to the present. Good gracious, the fact that he has again taken to being unfaithful only flatters me because it makes me feel younger. And yet I preferred his earlier method. You see, it was too long since he had been untrue to me and he couldn't remember how to go about it. Still, we're not on bad terms, we talk to one another, we're rather fond of one another," the Duchess explained, fearing I might have inferred that they had separated entirely, and then, in the way people say of a very sick person, "But he can still speak very clearly, I read to him for an hour this morning," she added, "I'm going to tell him you're here, he will want to see you." And she went over to the Duke, who was sitting on a sofa with a lady with whom he was engaged in conversation. But seeing his wife coming to speak to him, he put on such an angry look that she had no choice but to withdraw. "He's busy over something or other; we'll see about it later on," she said to me, preferring to let me get out of the situation as best I could. Bloch now came up and asked us, in behalf of his American friend, for the name of a certain young duchess who was there. I replied that she was a niece of M. de Bréauté but Bloch asked an explanation of this name, as it meant nothing to him. "Ah, Bréauté!" exclaimed Mme. de Guermantes, speaking to me. "You remember—good heavens, how far away that all is!" Then, turning to Bloch, "Well then, I'll tell you. He was a snob. They were people who lived near my mother-in-law's. That

wouldn't interest you but it's amusing to my friend here," she explained pointing to me, "as he used to know all those people in the old days, at the same time I did," she added, shewing me by these remarks and in many ways how long a time had gone by. Mme. de Guermantes' friendships and opinions had been renewed so many times since then that she now regarded her charming Babel as a snob. Besides, he was not only far back in the past but—and this was something I had not perceived when, during my first years in society, I had believed him to be one of the essential notables of Paris who would remain forever associated with its social history, as Colbert is with the reign of Louis XIV—he, too, had his stamp of *provincialism*; he used to be a country neighbour of the old Duchess and it was on that footing that the Princesse des Laumes had come to know him. However, this same Bréauté, stripped of his wit and relegated to such a distant past that he was out-of-date—which proved that he had since then been completely forgotten by the Duchess and in the neighbourhood of Guermantes—constituted a connecting link between the Duchess and myself (something I would never have imagined that first evening at the Opéra-Comique, where he had seemed to me like a sea-god dwelling in his marine grotto) because she remembered that I had known him, therefore that I was a friend of hers and, if not born into her social circle, had at any rate lived in it a much longer time than many of the people about us, and because she remembered this and yet incorrectly enough to have forgotten certain details which had at the time seemed of vital importance, namely, that I did not go to Guermantes in those days and was only a middle-class Combray lad the time she came to Mlle. Percepied's nuptial mass, that, notwithstanding all the entreaties of Saint-Loup, she did not send me an invitation during the year that followed her appearance at the Opéra Comique. To me this seemed of prime importance, for it was just at that moment that the existence of the Duchesse de Guermantes appeared to me like a Paradise I sh[illegible]

enter; but to her it was the same humdrum life she always led, and since somewhat later I had dined with her frequently and, morever, even before that time had been a friend of her aunt and her nephew, she could no longer tell at what point our friendship had begun and did not realise what a terrible anachronism she committed in setting the beginning of it several years too early. For, according to that, I would have known the Mme. de Guermantes of the name I then believed impossible to know and I would have been received within the charmed circle of the name of golden syllables, and into the Faubourg Saint-Germain, whereas I had merely gone to dine with a lady who by then meant no more to me than any other and who had sometimes obtained an invitation for me, not to descend into the submarine realm of the Nereids but to spend the evening in her cousin's box at the opera. "If you wish some details concerning Bréauté, who wasn't worth that much trouble," she added, speaking to Bloch, "get them from my friend here, who is worth a hundred of him and who has dined with him at my house dozens of times. Wasn't it at my house you met him? Anyhow, that was where you made Swann's acquaintance." And I was as much surprised that she should think I might have met M. de Bréauté anywhere else than at her house—and therefore had the entrée to that social circle before I knew her—as I was to see that she believed it was at her house that I first met Swann. Less untruthfully than Gilberte when she said of De Bréauté, "He's an old neighbour of mine in the country; I enjoy talking with him about Tansonville," whereas he was not among their friends at Tansonville in the early days, I might have said of Swann, who, as a matter of fact, recalled to my mind anything but the Guermantes, "He was a neighbour of ours in the country who often used to come to call on us in the evening." "I don't know just how to explain it," she went on. "He was a man who had said it all when he talked of Royal Highnesses. He had a collection of rather funny stories about the people of Guermantes, about my mother-in-law and

about Mme. de Varambon before she became a member of *the household of the Princesse de Parme. But does* anybody to-day know who Mme. de Varambon was? My friend here, yes, he knew all that crowd, but they're all dead and gone; even their names don't exist any longer and, besides, they didn't deserve to be remembered." And notwithstanding the unified whole which society seems to be, in which, in truth, social relationships reach their highest degree of concentration and everything is interrelated, I realised how it still contains some provinces or, at any rate, how Time creates some which change their names and are unintelligible to people who arrive after the configuration has altered. "*She was a good soul who used to say things of* unparalleled stupidity," the Duchess continued, referring to Mme. de Varambon and, insensible to that poetry of the incomprehensible which is an effect of Time, singling out the humorous element, as was her wont, after the fashion of the Meilhac type of literature and in keeping with the Guermantes wit. "At one time she had a mania for constantly swallowing pills that were prescribed in those days for a cough and were called," she added, laughing herself at a name so *distinctive and formerly so well known*, but today unknown to the people she was talking to, "Géraudel pills. 'Mme. de Varambon,' my mother-in-law would say *to her, 'you will ruin your digestion by swallowing Géraudel* pills all the time like that.' 'But my dear Duchess,' Mme. de Varambon replied, 'how could they ruin my digestion when they go into my bronchial tubes?' And then it was she who used to say that the Duchess had a cow which was 'so handsome that it was always taken for a stallion'." And Mme. de Guermantes would gladly *have continued* to tell anecdotes about Mme. de Varambon, of which we knew *hundreds*, but we realised that her name did not suggest to Bloch's uninformed memory any of the pictures which came up before our eyes at the mention of Mme. de Varambon, M. de Bréauté, the Prince d'Agrigente, and therefore perhaps it inspired him with a feeling of respect which I

knew to be excessive but which I found quite comprehensible —not, however, because I had myself experienced it, for our own mistakes and absurdities rarely have the effect, even when we have seen through them completely, of making us more indulgent toward similar shortcomings in others.

The past had become so altered in the Duchess's mind, or else the lines of demarcation that existed in mine had always been so entirely lacking in hers, that what had been a noteworthy event for me had passed unnoticed by her and she was able to assume that I had first met Swann at her house and M. de Bréauté elsewhere, thus attributing to me a social past which she carried too far back. For this sense of the passage of time which I had just acquired the Duchess possessed also, but with the opposite illusion to mine, which had been to believe past time shorter than it was, whereas she, on the contrary, exaggerated its duration and made it extend back too far, especially in her failure to take into account that infinite line of demarcation between the period when she was only a name for me (later the object of my love) and the period when she was for me merely a society woman like any other. Now, it was only during the second period that I had gone to her house and by then she had become a different person for me. But these differences escaped her eyes and she would not have thought it strange if it had turned out that I had been at her house two years earlier, since she did not know that at that time she was quite another person in my eyes and since her own personality did not shew to her, as it did to me, any break in continuity.

I told the Duchesse de Guermantes that Bloch had thought it was the former Princesse de Guermantes who was giving the reception and I added, "That recalls the first evening I went to the Princesse de Guermantes', when I believed I had not been invited and would be put out and when you wore a red dress and red shoes." "Good heavens, how far back all of that is!" replied the Duchess, thereby accentuating for me the impression of the passage of time. She gazed into the distance with a melancholy look and yet dwelt

on the red dress with special insistence. I asked her to describe it to me and she did so obligingly. "Such dresses are not worn to-day at all. It was a style of that period." "But weren't they good-looking?" I inquired. She was always afraid of giving the other person an advantage and lowering her own prestige by something she might say. "Yes, indeed. I thought them very pretty. They are not worn now because they are not being made any more. But they will be worn again. All the old styles come back, in dress and music and painting," she added emphatically, thinking there was some originality in this philosophy. However, the sadness of the thought of growing old brought on a look of weariness again, which a smile struggled to overcome. "You are sure they were red shoes? I thought they were gold ones." I assured her that it was most vividly present in my mind, without reminding her of the circumstance which made me so positive about it. "It is very kind of you to remember that," she said, with an air of tenderness, for women call us kind when we remember their beauty, as artists do when we admire their paintings. Moreover, in the case of a strong-minded woman like the Duchess, however remote the past may be, one cannot forget it. "Do you recall," she remarked, as a reward for having remembered her dress and shoes, "how we brought you home, Basin and I? You had a young girl coming to see you after midnight Basin laughed heartily at the idea that anyone should call on you at that hour." I did, in fact, remember that Albertine had come to see me that evening after the Princesse de Guermantes' soirée; I remembered it as clearly as did the Duchess, even though I was as indifferent to Albertine now as Mme. de Guermantes would have been, had she known that Albertine was the young girl on whose account I could not stop at their house. The truth is that for a long time after love for those who have died has left our hearts, their ashes, now of no further interest to us, continue to be mixed like an alloy with the incidents of the past. And though we love them no longer, it happens that,

when we call to mind a room, a garden path, a road where they were at a certain hour, we are forced, in order to fill the space they occupied, to allude to them, even without longing for them or naming them or allowing anyone to know their identity. (Mme. de Guermantes scarcely identified the young girl who was to come that evening, had never known her name and mentioned her only because of the strangeness of the hour and the circumstance.) Such are the final, unenviable forms that survival assumes.

Although the opinions the Duchess then expressed concerning Rachel were commonplace in themselves, they interested me because of the fact that they, too, marked a new hour on the dial of time. For the Duchess had not forgotten, any more than had Rachel, the evening that the latter had spent at her house, but her recollection of it had undergone at least as great a transformation. "I must admit," she said, "that I am all the more interested in listening to her recite and hearing them applaud her because it was I who discovered her, appreciated her talent, sang her praises, pushed her to the front at a time when she was unknown and everybody was laughing at her. Yes, my dear, it will surprise you to know that mine was the first house in which she was heard in public. Yes, when all the people who claim to be ahead of the times, like my new cousin," she said, indicating sarcastically the Princesse de Guermantes, who for her was still Mme. Verdurin, "would have let her die of hunger without condescending to listen to her, I thought her promising and got her an engagement to come and recite at my house before all the most ultra-fashionable people. I can say, using a rather silly and pretentious expression (for at bottom real talent needs no assistance) that it was I who gave her her start. Of course, she did not need me." I made a slight gesture of protest and saw that Mme. de Guermantes was quite ready to entertain the contrary proposition. "You don't agree with me? You think talent needs a backer? After all, you may be right. It's odd but you say just what Dumas used to tell

me. In that case, I am extremely flattered if I have had some part, however small, not in the talent, obviously, but in the fame of such an artist" Mme. de Guermantes preferred to give up her idea that talent breaks through of itself, like an abscess, because it was then more flattering for her, but also because for some time she had been admitting newcomers to her home and, being tired out besides, had become rather humble, questioning others and asking their opinions in order to form her own. "I don't need to tell you," she went on, "that the intelligent audience known as 'polite society' did not grasp the value of her performance in the least. They protested, they laughed at it. It was of no use for me to tell them it was unique and intriguing, something that had never been done before; they did not believe me, just as they have never believed me about anything. It was the same way with the thing she acted, something by Maeterlinck; now it is well known, but at that time everybody was making fun of it, but for my part, I thought it very fine. I am surprised myself when I think that I, a country-bred woman, who had only such opportunities as village girls get, should have liked those things from the very first. Naturally, I could not have told you why, but they pleased me, they moved me deeply. Why, even Basin, who is not at all quick to sense such things, was struck by the effect it had on me and said to me, 'I don't want you to hear any more of that nonsense, it makes you ill.' And that was true because, although I am taken for a woman without feeling, at bottom I'm a bundle of nerves."

* * *

At this moment an unexpected incident occurred. A footman came and told Rachel that Berma's daughter and son-in-law desired to speak to her. We have seen that Berma's daughter had opposed her husband's desire to have someone ask Rachel for an invitation for them. But after the young man in question had left, the ennui of the young couple in the mother's company increased, the thought of the good

time other people were having tormented them—in fine, taking advantage of a moment when Berma, afflicted with a [illegible] room, they scurried to [illegible] nd arrived at the Prin- [illegible] been invited. Rachel, suspecting the situation and secretly flattered, assumed an arrogant air and told the footman she could not be disturbed and that they should write a note explaining the object of their extraordinary procedure. The footman returned with a card on which Berma's daughter had scrawled a note, saying that she and her husband had not been able to resist the desire to hear Rachel and asked her to let them come in. Rachel smiled over the silliness of their pretext and her own triumph, and sent back word that she was extremely sorry but she had finished her recitations. The footmen in the front hall, where the young couple were still waiting, were already beginning to snicker at the plight of the two supplicants refused admittance. The shame of a humiliating rebuff and the thought of how utterly insignificant Rachel was, compared with her mother, drove Berma's daughter to carry through to the end a step she had at first ventured to take only from her need of entertainment. She sent in a request to Rachel as a favour, even if she was not to hear her recite, that she be allowed to shake hands with her. Rachel was engaged in conversation with an Italian prince, who was reported to be fascinated by the charm of her large fortune, the source of which was somewhat glossed over by some social connexions; she saw in a flash the complete reversal of positions which now placed at her feet the children of the illustrious Berma. After narrating the incident to everyone in a humorous manner, she sent word to the young couple to come in, which they did without being asked twice, thereby ruining Berma's social standing at one stroke, as they had wrecked her health. Rachel had grasped this and also the fact that condescending amiability on her part would win her the name of being kind-hearted and give the young couple a reputation for servility more effectively than if she

refused to see them. Consequently, she received them with affected cordiality, exclaiming, with the air of a distinguished benefactor able to lay aside his greatness, "Why certainly! It gives me great pleasure. The Princess will be delighted." Not knowing it was believed at the theatre that it was she who had done the inviting, perhaps she was afraid that if she refused to let Berma's young people come in, they would question, not her goodwill, which would not have mattered to her, but her influence. The Duchesse de Guermantes instinctively moved away, for the more anyone seemed to be trying to get into society, the lower he fell in her estimation She had no respect at all for anything in the present situation except Rachel's kindliness and would have turned her back on Berma's young folk if someone had introduced them. Meanwhile, Rachel was already composing in her mind the gracious remarks with which she was going to crush Berma in the wings at the theatre—"I was terribly sorry, positively heartbroken, that your daughter had to wait out in the hall. *If only I had understood! She* sent me in one card after another." She was delighted to deal Berma this blow. She might, perhaps, have recoiled from delivering it, had she known it would be fatal People like to inflict suffering, but without putting themselves clearly in the wrong by killing their victim. Besides, what had she done that was wrong? As it turned out, she said with a laugh a few days later, "It's going a bit too far! I tried to be kinder to her children than she ever was to me, and now it wouldn't take much for me to be accused of having murdered her. I call the Duchess to witness" It seems as if, with the great actresses, all the mean sentiments and insincerity of theatrical life passed into their children, without the latter having the outlet of persistent work, as in the case of the mother; great actresses are frequently the victims of family conspiracies woven about them, as so often happened *in the dénouement* of the tragedies in which they acted.

Gilberte, as we have seen, had desired to avoid a clash with her aunt over Rachel. She was wise to do so; it was none too easy, at best, to undertake the defence of Odette's daughter in the presence of Mme. de Guermantes, so great was her animosity—and all because the "new way" in which the Duchess had told me her husband was being untrue to her referred to the manner in which the Duke was carrying on a liaison with Mme. de Forcheville, extraordinary as that might appear to anyone knowing Odette's age.

When one thought how old Mme. de Forcheville must be by this time, it did, indeed, seem extraordinary. But perhaps Odette had begun very young her career as a *femme galante*. And then, too, there are some women whom one meets every ten years in a fresh incarnation and with a fresh love affair (sometimes even after one thought them dead) driving to despair a young wife abandoned by her husband.

It should be said that the Duchess's life was undoubtedly very unhappy and for a certain reason which, in another direction, had had the result of leading M. de Guermantes likewise to frequent a social circle of a lower order. Long since sobered down by his advanced age, although still in robust health, he had ceased his conjugal infidelities, when he suddenly became infatuated with Mme. de Forcheville, no one knowing just how this liaison sprang up. But it had assumed such proportions that the old Duke, conducting this last love affair in the same way he had conducted those of former years, isolated his mistress from the world so completely that, while my love for Albertine had repeated, with important variations, Swann's love for Odette, M. de Guermantes' love for the latter recalled mine for Albertine. She was required to lunch and dine with him; he was always at her house; she put on airs over this with friends who, but for her, would never have had any contact with the Duc de Guermantes and who came there to meet him, more or less as people go to call on a courtesan in order to meet a sovereign who is her lover. It is true that Mme. de Forche-

ville had long before been admitted to good society. But, becoming a kept woman once more late in life and her lover being such a proud old man who, just the same, was the important personage in her house, she became quite insignificant herself, endeavouring merely to have wrappers he would like and meals he would enjoy and to flatter her friends by telling them she had spoken of them to him, just as she used to tell my great-uncle that she had mentioned him to the Grand Duke, who sent him some cigarettes—in a word, despite all the polish her social position had given her, she was tending, by force of new circumstances, to become again what she had appeared to my childish eyes—"the lady in pink." My uncle Adolphe, to be sure, had been dead many years. But does the substitution of other persons about us in place of the old ones prevent our taking up the old life again? It was doubtless partly through avarice that she had adapted herself to the new circumstances, but also because, rather sought after by society folk while she had a marriageable daughter, she had been dropped as soon as Gilberte married Saint-Loup and she felt that the Duc de Guermantes, who was ready to do anything for her, would attract to her home a number of duchesses, who might be glad to do a mean turn to their friend Oriane, and perhaps finally she came to enjoy the situation because of the displeasure of the Duchess, whom a feminine spirit of rivalry made her glad to triumph over. Some very exclusive nephews of the Duc de Guermantes, the Courvoisiers, also Mme. de Marsantes and the Princesse de Trania went to Mme. de Forcheville's in the hope of being remembered in the Duke's will, without concerning themselves about the annoyance which that might cause Mme. de Guermantes, whom Odette, stung by her sovereign contempt, spoke ill of on every possible occasion This liaison with Mme. de Forcheville, which was merely an imitation of his earlier ones, had just caused the Duc de Guermantes to lose for the second time a chance to be elected president of the Jockey Club and also a member-at-large in the Académie des Beaux-Arts,

just as M. de Charlus' publicly known association with M. Jupien had cost him the presidency of the Union Club and also of the Société des Amis du Vieux Paris. Thus the two brothers, so different in their tastes, had both lowered their social prestige as a result of the same indolence, the same lack of will power, which had been noticeable, although agreeably so, in the Duc de Guermantes, their grandfather, a member of the Académie Française, but which had allowed a natural inclination in one of his grandsons and, in the other, what is regarded as an unnatural vice to injure their social standing.

The old Duke did not go out into society any more since he spent his days and evenings at Odette's. But this day, since she had gone to the Princesse de Guermantes' reception, he had come for a moment to see her, in spite of the annoyance of meeting his wife. I no doubt would not have recognised him if the Duchess had not clearly indicated him to me by going over toward him. He was now only a ruin, but a majestic one and something finer than a ruin, that beautifully romantic thing, a rock in the midst of a storm. Lashed on every side by the waves of suffering, by anger at having to suffer, by the rising tide of the sea which surrounded it on all sides, his face, looking like a crumbling block of stone, still retained the distinction and the proud carriage I had always admired; it was worn away, like one of those handsome antique heads, badly damaged, but a welcome adornment in one's study. It looked merely as if it had belonged to an earlier age, not only because of the rough and uneven surface of its formerly smooth and polished material but also because the former expression of shrewdness and good humour had given way to an involuntary and unconscious expression, induced by illness, of struggle against death, of resistance, of difficulty in keeping alive. The arteries, having lost all their elasticity, had given a statuesque hardness to his formerly genial countenance. And without his being aware of it, certain aspects of the back of his neck, his cheeks and his forehead suggested a human being clinging

frantically to each minute and hurried along in a tragic whirlwind, while the whitened locks of his thinned-out hair came and buffeted with their foam the storm-beaten promontory of his face. And like those strange, unusual lights which only the approach of a storm that is going to engulf everything casts over the rocks, till then of a different colour, so I realised that the leaden hue of his rigid, worn cheeks, the almost white, wavy gray of his disordered locks, the dim light still lingering in his enfeebled eyes, were tints, not unreal—on the contrary, only too real—but fantastic and borrowed from the palette of the light cast by old age and approaching death, a light inimitable in its terrifying and prophetic shadows.—The Duke remained only a few minutes, but long enough for me to see that Odette, engrossed with younger suitors, flouted him. And strangely enough, he who used to be almost comical when he assumed the bearing of the kings of the tragic stage, now had a truly imposing air, somewhat like his brother, whom he had come to resemble as old age relieved him of all superfluity. And once proud, like his brother, but not in the same way, he now seemed almost deferential, although here also in a different manner. For he had not undergone the same decadence as M. de Charlus, who was reduced to greeting, with the politeness of a forgetful invalid, folk whom he once would have scorned; but the Duke was very old and when he started to go out the door and down the staircase on his way home, old age—which is, after all, the most wretched condition for men and hurls them from their high estate most nearly like the kings of Greek tragedy—old age, forcing him to stop on the *via crucis* that life comes to be for feeble persons threatened with death, and wipe his moist brow, groping about and peering to discover a step he could not find because he had need of a guide for his uncertain feet and beclouded eyes, old age gave him, without his being conscious of it, the air of gently and timidly entreating aid of others and thereby made him more than impressive, appealing.

Thus, in the Faubourg Saint-Germain those three appar

ently impregnable positions of the Duc and Duchesse de Guermantes and the Baron de Charlus had lost their inviolability, just as all things in this world change through the action of an inner principle no one had given a thought to—in M. de Charlus, his love for Charlie, which had made him a slave of the Verdurins and then induced his senility; in Mme. de Guermantes, a love of novelty and art; in M. de Guermantes, a despotic love like others he had experienced in his life but which the feebleness of old age made still more tyrannical, a love whose weaknesses were no longer controverted and socially atoned for by the austerity of the Duchess's salon, where the Duke no longer appeared and which, for that matter, had virtually ceased to function. Thus does the form of the things of this world change; thus the center of empires, the cadastre of private fortunes and the chart of social positions, all that seemed definitively fixed, is being continually made over and the eyes of a man can during a lifetime contemplate the most complete change in the very quarters where it had seemed to him the most impossible.

Unable to get along without Odette, all the time installed at her house in the same armchair, from which old age and gout made it difficult for him to rise, M. de Guermantes allowed her to receive her friends, who were only too happy to be presented to the Duke, let him do all the talking and listen to his tales of the social life of former times, of the Marquise de Villeparisis, of the Duc de Chartres.

There were times when, looked down upon by the old paintings brought together by Swann in a collector's arrangement which put the finishing touch to the oldfashioned character of the scene, with its Duke so reminiscent of the Restoration, and its courtesan so suggestive of the Second Empire, wearing one of the wrappers he liked, "the lady in pink" would interrupt him with an outburst of chatter and he would stop short and glare ferociously at her. Possibly he had noticed that, like the Duchess, she also sometimes made foolish remarks; or perhaps, in an old man's

hallucination, he thought it was some inopportune witty comment by Mme. de Guermantes that had cut him short, and he believed he was back at the Guermantes residence, like those caged beasts which imagine for a moment that they are once more free in the deserts of Africa. Looking up sharply with his little yellow eyes, which gleamed like a wild animal's, he would fix on her one of those looks that sometimes, when Mme. de Guermantes talked too much, used to make me tremble. In that way would the Duke gaze for a while at the audacious "lady in pink." But she would stand her ground, looking him squarely in the eye, and after a moment, which seemed long to those looking on, the old lion, cowed, remembering that he was not at the Duchess's and free, in that Sahara the entrance to which was marked by the door-mat on the landing, but at Mme. de Forcheville's, in a cage of the Zoological Garden, would draw in his head between his shoulders, with its still abundant mane, blond or white, one could not tell which, and take up his story again. He appeared not to have understood what Mme. de Forcheville wanted to say, which, for that matter, did not generally have much sense. He allowed her to have some friends come to dine with him but, through a whimsical caprice borrowed from his earlier love affairs, which could not have greatly surprised Odette, accustomed as she was to the same from Swann, and which struck a sympathetic chord in me by recalling my life with Albertine, he stipulated that these people should withdraw in good season, so that he might be the last to say good-night to Odette. Needless to say, he had scarcely left when she would go and join other friends. But the Duke did not suspect this—or preferred to appear not to; the sight of old men grows weaker, just as likewise they become hard of hearing, their keenness of observation is dulled, weariness even causes them to relax their vigilance. And there comes a certain age when Jupiter inevitably changes into a character of Molière—not even into the Olympian lover of Alcmène but into a ludicrous Géronte. Furthermore, when Odette was untrue to the Duke

—and also when she cared for his wants—it was with neither charm nor dignity. She was mediocre in this rôle as in all the others. Not that life had not frequently assigned her fine parts but she had not known how to play them. And now she was acting the rôle of recluse. As a matter of fact, every time thereafter that I endeavoured to meet her somewhere, I failed to do so, for M. de Guermantes, wishing to adjust the requirements of hygiene to the exigencies of his jealousy, permitted her only daytime affairs and, at that, no dancing parties. For various reasons she admitted to me frankly this seclusion in which she was held. The principal reason was that, although I had written only some articles and published nothing but some sketches, she fancied I was a well known author, which led her to say naïvely, recalling the days when I used to go to the Avenue des Acacias to see her pass by, and later to her house, "Ah, if I had only foreseen that that young fellow would one day be a great writer!" And so, having heard say that writers like to be in women's company in order to obtain first-hand material and get them to tell the story of their love affairs, she now became a plain prostitute again with me in order to attract my interest. "Why, once there was a man who was crazy about me and I loved him madly, too. We led a heavenly existence. He had to make a trip to America and I was to go with him. The night before our departure I decided it was more beautiful not to risk the decline of a love which could not always remain so fine. We had a last evening, when he believed I was leaving with him; it was a mad night, in his arms I experienced infinite joy, together with the despair of realising that I would never see him again. The next morning I went and gave my ticket to a traveller whom I did not know. He wished at least to pay me something for it. I replied, 'No, you are doing me such a favour by taking it off my hands that I do not wish any money'." Then came another story. "One day I was in the Champs-Elysées. M. de Bréauté, whom I had never seen but once, began to stare at me with such insistence that

I stopped and asked him why he took the liberty of looking at me in that way. He answered, 'I am staring at you because you're wearing a ridiculous hat.' That was true It was a small hat with pansies on it, the styles of that day were frightful. But I was furious and said to him, 'I will not allow you to talk to me in that manner.' It came on to rain. I said to him, 'I would pardon you only if you had a carriage.' 'Very good! it so happens that I have one and I will see you home.' 'No, I am quite willing to accept your carriage but not your company.' I entered the carriage and he went off in the rain But that evening he arrived at my house We had two years of mad love" She went on again, "Come and have tea with me some day and *I'll tell you all about how I came to meet M. de Forcheville.* After all," she added, with a melancholy air, "I have spent my life as cloistered as a nun because my real lovers have all been men who were *terribly* jealous of me. I'm *not* talking of M. de Forcheville, for at bottom he was of only average ability and I have never been able really to love any but intelligent men. But let me tell you, M Swann used to be just as jealous as the poor Duke is now. I deny myself everything because I know he is not happy at home In M Swann's case it was because I loved him madly, and I maintain one surely can give up dancing, going out and all the rest if that will please, or *merely* avoid causing anxiety to, the man one loves. Poor Charles! he was so intelligent, so fascinating, just the sort of man I love" And possibly *that was true.* There had been a period when she liked Swann, precisely the period when she was "not his kind." To tell the truth, she never was "his kind" even later on. And yet he loved her at that time very deeply and greatly to his sorrow. Later he was surprised at this contradiction; but there is no contradiction in it if we stop to think what a great amount of suffering is caused in men's lives by women who were "not their kind." That may be due to many causes: in the first place, since they are not our kind, we let ourselves be loved at first without loving

in return and in that way we allow a habit to get a grip on our life which would not have been the case with a woman of our kind, who, feeling herself desired, would have set up a resistance, granted only an occasional rendezvous and not become so intimately connected with every hour of our life that if, later, love is aroused and then the beloved one happens to go away, either because of a quarrel or on a journey when she leaves us without news, not merely one tie is sundered but a thousand. In the second place, the hold they get on our affections is only a sentimental one, because it is not based on deep physical desire and, even if love develops, the mind works still more—instead of a need, we have a romance. We feel no distrust of women who are not our kind; we let them love us and if we then come to love them, we love them a hundred times more than the others but without experiencing with them the contentment of satisfied desire. For these and many other reasons, the fact that our greatest sorrows come to us through women who are not our kind is not due solely to the mockery of fate which realises our happiness only in the form that brings us the least pleasure. A woman who is our kind is seldom dangerous because she desires nothing from us, satisfies and [illegible]e; and what [illegible] is not the [illegible]uriosity to know what she is doing at every instant—not the woman, but our habit of her. I lowered myself so far as to remark that what she had said of Swann was very fine and noble on her part; but I knew how untrue it was and that her candour was blended with falsehood. While she was telling me of her adventures, I thought with consternation of all that Swann had been unconscious of, and how much suffering it would have caused him because he had fixed his highly sensitised affection on this creature and was able to divine unerringly, just from the look in her eyes, when she espied an unknown man or woman who pleased her. At bottom, she told me all this solely to give me, as she thought, mate-

rial for novels. In this she was mistaken—not that she had not from the beginning abundantly stocked my imagination, but in a much more unintentional manner and through an initiative emanating from me which, without her knowing it, induced from her own self the laws of her life.

M. de Guermantes reserved his fulminations exclusively for the Duchess, whose free and easy associations Mme. de Forcheville took good care to call to his irritated attention. In consequence, the Duchess was very unhappy. It is true that M. de Charlus, to whom I once mentioned this situation, maintained that his brother had not been the first one to blame, that the legend of the Duchess's chastity was actually made up of an incalculable number of cleverly dissembled adventures. I had never heard of this before. To almost everyone, Mme de Guermantes was a very different type of woman. The idea that her conduct had always been irreproachable was universally accepted. I was unable to determine which of these conceptions of her character was in accord with the truth—that truth which three-fourths of the people nearly always miss. I did, indeed, remember certain roving glances of the Duchess's blue eyes in the nave at Combray but, in truth, they did not conflict with either hypothesis and might be interpreted one way or the other with equal acceptability. For a moment, in my childish infatuation, I had taken them for loving glances intended for me. Then later I had come to understand that they were the kindly glances bestowed on her vassals by a sovereign like the one in the stained-glass windows of the church. Should I now believe that my first idea had been the right one and that, if the Duchess never thereafter spoke to me of love, this was only because she was more afraid of compromising herself with a friend of her aunt and her nephew than with an unknown lad encountered by chance at Saint-Hilaire de Combray?

* * *

The Duchess may for a moment have been glad to feel her past more substantial because shared by me, but upon my

After having expressed her unfavourable opinion of the Empire style, she apologised for talking to me about people [illegible] things like the [illegible] she was as far from imagining why that interested me as Mme. de Saint-Euverte de La Rochefoucauld, seeking the welfare of her stomach or an Ingres-like effect, was from suspecting that her name had fascinated me—her husband's name (not her parents' more illustrious one) which seemed in my eyes to be a function assigned to her to rock the cradle of Time in that so appropriate setting. "But why am I talking to you about such nonsense and how can it possibly interest you?" exclaimed the Duchess. She made this remark in a low voice and no one heard what she said. But a young man (who, as it turned out later on, aroused my interest because of a name that was formerly much more familiar to me than that of Saint-Euverte) rose with an exasperated air and moved away in order to listen to the music without distraction. For it was the *Kreutzer Sonata* they were playing but, having misunderstood the program, he thought it was a piece by Ravel which he had been told was as beautiful as Palestrina's work but difficult to understand. In his impulsive haste to change his seat, he struck against a small writing desk on account of the semi-darkness and this caused a number [illegible] have this simple exercise c[illegible] a moment the ordeal of [illegible] *Kreutzer Sonata.* And Mme. de Guermantes and I, the cause of this little scandal, hastened to move on to another room. "Yes, how can such trifles interest a man of your ability? In the same way, a little while ago, I saw you talking with Gilberte de Saint-Loup. It's not worthy of you. That woman means exactly nothing to me; she isn't even a woman; she's the most artificial, middle-class thing I know"—for, even in her championing of what was up-to-date, the Duchess retained her aristocratic prejudices. "And what's more, ought you to come to houses like this? As for to-day's affair, I can

understand it because there was the recitation by Rachel—that might be of interest to you. But fine as she was, she doesn't do herself justice before this crowd. I will have you lunch alone with her and then you'll see what a splendid creature she is. Let me tell you, she is a hundred times finer than anybody here. And after the luncheon she will recite some Verlaine to you. I know you will be enthusiastic over it." She specially boasted to me of her afternoon gatherings, at which she said one would always find X and Y. For she had come to such a conception of the woman with a "salon"—whom she used to look down on with contempt, although now she denied it—that in her eyes the chief point of superiority, the mark of election, was to have "all the men" at one's house When I mentioned to her that a certain fashionable woman with a "salon" of her own spoke ill of Mme. Howland, the Duchess burst into a laugh over my *naïveté*, exclaiming, "Naturally, since Mme. Howland had all the men at her salon and the other woman was trying to draw them away." "But why you should come to great, big affairs like this," she went on, "is beyond my comprehension—unless it is to make some studies," she added, with an air of doubt and distrust, for she did not dare to venture too far, not knowing very clearly of what the type of improbable operation to which she was alluding consisted

"Don't you think," I asked the Duchess, "that it must be painful for Mme. de Saint-Loup to listen to her husband's former mistress as she did a little while ago?" I saw fall obliquely across Mme de Guermantes' face that shadow which seems like a chain of deep reflexions connecting something we have just heard with unpleasant thoughts—unexpressed reflexions, it is true, but not all the serious things we say receive a reply, oral or written. Only a fool sends two vain entreaties in succession for a reply to a letter which was a blunder and which it was a mistake to write, for such letters are answered only with deeds; and the correspondent we believed to be unpunctual says "Monsieur" when she meets us, instead of calling us by our first name. My

allusion to Saint-Loup's liaison with Rachel had nothing so [illegible] about it and could not have displeased Mme. de Guer- [illegible]

the humiliation Rachel had suffered at her soirée at the Duchess's. But she did not follow her reflexions any further, the threatening shadow faded away and she remarked, in reply to my question concerning Mme. de Saint-Loup, "I must admit I think it is a matter of indifference to her, especially as she never loved her husband. She's a dreadful little piece. She liked the social prestige, the name, her position as my niece, the opportunity to climb out of the mire—after which her only thought was how to get down into it again. I confess I felt very badly about this on poor Robert's account for, although he wasn't terribly keen, he was aware of it all and of a lot of other things besides. This mustn't be repeated because, after all, she's my niece—I haven't absolute proof that she was untrue to him but there have been a lot of stories going around. But what if I tell you that I know it for a fact that Robert wanted to fight a duel with an officer from Méséglise? It was because of all this that Robert went and enlisted. The war seemed to him a way of escape from his domestic troubles and, if you want to know what I think, he wasn't killed, he met his death intentionally. She didn't shew any grief at all; she even astounded me with her remarkable cynicism in affecting indifference, which pained me greatly, for I loved poor Robert deeply. Perhaps it will surprise you, because people don't really understand me, but even now I still think of him occasionally. I never forget anyone. He never said a word to me about it, but he understood that I guessed everything. Why, if she had loved her husband the least little bit, could she take it so coolly to be in the same drawing-room with the woman whose infatuated lover he was for so many years—to the very last, one might say, for I am convinced that it was never broken off, not even during the war? Why! she would jump at the woman's throat," exclaimed the Duchess,

forgetting that she had acted cruelly in having Rachel invited and thereby making possible the scene which she considered would have been inevitable, had Gilberte loved Robert. "No, let me tell you, she's a dirty little slut." Such an expression was rendered possible for Mme. de Guermantes, owing to the pleasant incline she was descending from the Guermantes social circle to the company of common actresses and also because she coupled all that with an eighteenth-century manner which she considered full of vigour; and, lastly, because she thought she could do anything she pleased. But this expression was also prompted by the hatred she felt for Gilberte and a need of attacking her, if not actually, at least in effigy. At the same time the Duchess thought she was thereby justifying all her behaviour toward—or, rather, against—Gilberte in society, in the family circle, even with reference to Robert's property and his estate. But sometimes the opinions we form receive unexpected confirmation from facts we were ignorant of and could not have surmised. Gilberte, who had doubtless inherited some of her mother's traits (and it was just this laxity of standards which I had instinctively counted on in asking her to introduce me to some very young girls) after thinking over the request I had made, no doubt in order to keep the benefits within the family, reached a more daring conclusion than any I had been able to imagine; coming up to me again, she said, "If you permit, I'm going to get my daughter and introduce her to you. She's over there, talking with young Mortemart and other uninteresting youngsters. I'm sure she would be a nice little friend for you." I asked her if Robert had been glad to have a daughter. "Oh, he was tremendously proud of her. But naturally, considering his tastes," Gilberte added naïvely, "I think he would have preferred a son." This daughter, whose name and fortune might have given the mother ground to hope that she would marry a royal prince and thereby crown the entire upward effort of Swann and his wife, later chose as husband an obscure literary man, for she had no

snobbishness, and thereby brought the family below the level from which she had started. It was then extremely difficult to convince the younger generations that the parents of this modest couple had enjoyed high social rank.

The surprise and pleasure caused me by Gilberte's remarks quickly gave way, as she went off toward another drawing-room, to the idea of past Time which Mlle. de Saint-Loup also, in her own way, conveyed to me even before I had seen her. Like most persons, moreover, did she not resemble the star-like crossroads in a forest where paths leading from the most different points converge, also for our life? Many were the paths of my life which met in Mlle. de Saint-Loup and radiated outward from her. First of all, there came to an end in her the two principal "ways" where I had taken so many walks and dreamed so many dreams—through her father, Robert de Saint-Loup, the Guermantes way; through Gilberte, her mother, the Méséglise way, which was Swann's way. One of them, through the young girl's mother and the Champs-Elysées, led me to Swann, to my evenings at Combray, to the Méséglise way; the other, through her father, to my afternoons at Balbec, where I saw him again beside the sun-lit sea. And straightway crossroads between these two main roads defined themselves. For this very real Balbec where I had met Saint-Loup—it was largely on account of what Swann had told me about the churches, especially about the Persian church, that I had so much wanted to go there; and on the other hand, through Robert de Saint-Loup, nephew of the Duchesse de Guermantes, I came out on the Guermantes way again at Combray. But Mlle. de Saint-Loup led to many other points of my life besides—to "the lady in pink," for example, who was her grandmother and whom I had seen at my great-uncle's. A fresh crossroad here, because the great-uncle's valet, who opened the door to me that day and who later, through the gift of a photograph, made it possible for me to identify "the lady in pink," was the uncle * of the young

* In earlier volumes in this series, it is his father.—*F.A.B.*

man who had been loved, not only by M. de Charlus but also by the same father of Mlle. de Saint-Loup, who had thereby made her mother unhappy. And was it not Mlle. de Saint-Loup's grandfather, Swann, who had been the first to mention to me Vinteuil's music, just as Gilberte had been the first to speak to me of Albertine? Now, it was while talking with Albertine about Vinteuil's music that I had discovered who was her closest girl friend and had begun that life with her which had led to her death and had brought me so much sorrow. Moreover, it was also Mlle. de Saint-Loup's father who had gone to try to get Albertine to come back to me. And there even passed before my eyes again my entire society life, both in Paris, in the Swann and the Guermantes salons, and, quite at the other extreme, at Balbec, at the Verdurins'—which thus brought up alongside the two Combray "ways" the Champs-Elysées and the beautiful terrace of La Raspelière. Moreover, whom have we known whose friendship with us we can recount without being necessarily obliged to place him in all the most widely different settings of our existence? A life of Saint-Loup painted by me would extend through all the various scenes of my own life and involve my entire existence, even those portions of it to which he was a stranger, such as my grandmother and Albertine. Furthermore, however far apart they were, the Verdurins were connected with Odette [illegible]

young Cambremer had married. Assuredly, if it is only a question of our hearts, the poet was right in speaking of the mysterious threads that life breaks. But it is even more true that life is ceaselessly weaving other threads between human beings and events, that life crosses these threads with one another and doubles them to make the weft heavier, so that, between the tiniest point in our past life and all the other points, a rich network of memories leaves us only t

choice of which road to take. One could say that there was not—if I endeavoured not to use it unthinkingly but to remember what it had been—a single one of the things I was using at that time which had not been a living thing, living in a personal relationship to me, and later transformed for my use into simple industrial material. And my introduction to Mlle. de Saint-Loup was going to take place in the home of Mme. Verdurin, now become the Princesse de Guermantes! With what charm I thought over all my journeys with Albertine, whose successor I was going to ask Mlle. de Saint-Loup to be—in the little tram, near Douville on the way to Mme. Verdurin's, that same Mme. Verdurin who, before I loved Albertine, had brought about and then broken off the love between the grandfather and grandmother of Mlle. de Saint-Loup. All about us were paintings by the Elstir who had introduced me to Albertine. And, the better to fuse together all the past periods of my life, Mme. Verdurin, like Gilberte, had married a Guermantes.

We could not recount our relations even with someone we have known only slightly without bringing in, one after the other, the most diverse settings of our life. Thus, every individual—and I was myself one of these individuals—measured the duration of time for me by the revolution he had accomplished, not only on his own axis, but about other individuals and notably by the successive positions he had occupied with relation to myself.

And in truth, all these different planes on which Time, since I had come to grasp its meaning again at this reception, was arranging the different periods of my life, thereby bringing me to realise that in a book which aimed to recount a human life one would have to use, in contrast to the "plane" psychology ordinarily employed, a sort of three-dimensional, "solid" psychology, added a fresh beauty to the resurrections of the past which my memory had evoked as I sat musing alone in the library, because memory, by bringing the past into the present unmodified, just as it appeared

when it was itself the present, eliminates precisely that great dimension of Time which governs the fullest realisation of our lives.

I saw Gilberte coming toward me. I, for whom Saint-Loup's marriage and the thoughts that filled my mind at that time and which had that very day come back to me unchanged were as of yesterday, was astonished to see beside her a young girl about sixteen years old, whose tall figure was like a measure of the long lapse of years I had endeavoured to ignore.

Time, colourless and impalpable, had, in order that I might, as it were, see and touch it, physically embodied itself in her and had moulded her like a work of art, while at the same time on me, alas, it had merely done its work! And now Mlle. de Saint-Loup stood before me. She had deep-set, clear-cut, profoundly searching eyes. I was struck with the way in which her nose, modelled on her mother's and her grandmother's, ended sharply at a perfectly horizontal line below it, exquisite albeit not short enough. A single feature as distinctive, even had one seen nothing else, would have made it possible to identify one statue among thousands, and I marvelled how nature had come back in the nick of time for the granddaughter, as she had for the mother and grandmother, to give the mighty, deciding stroke of the chisel, like some great and unique sculptor. That charming nose, slightly prominent like a bird's beak, had the curve, not of Swann's but of Saint-Loup's. The soul of that Guermantes was gone, but the charming head of the departed bird, with its piercing eyes, had come and taken its place on the shoulders of Mlle. de Saint-Loup, to plunge her father's friends into dreamy musings. I thought her very beautiful, still full of promise. Laughing, fashioned of the very years I had lost, she seemed to me like my own youth.

And lastly, this idea of time had a final value for me; it was like a goad, reminding me that it was time to begin if I wished to achieve what I had occasionally in the course of my life sensed in brief flashes, along the Guermantes way o

while driving with Mme. de Villeparisis, and which had

in short, extract the real essence of life in a book. Hap the man who could write such a book, I thought to mys what a mighty task before him! To convey an idea of one would have to go to the noblest and most varied arts comparisons, for this writer, who, moreover, would have shew the most contradictory sides of each of his charact in order to give his volume the effect of a solid, would n to prepare it with minute care, constantly regrouping forces as if for an attack, endure it like an exhausting ta accept it like a rule of conduct, build it like a church, foll it like a regimen, overcome it like an obstacle, win it lik friendship, feed it intensively like a child, create it like world, without overlooking those mysteries whose explai tion is probably to be found only in other worlds and t presentiment of which is the quality in life and art wh moves us most deeply. And in those great books there certain portions which there has been time only to sketch and which no doubt will never be completed because of t very magnitude of the architect's plan. How many gr cathedrals remain unfinished! Such a book one nourish over a long period of time, builds up its weaker parts, kee it safe from harm; but later it is the book itself that gro up, selects our tomb, protects it against false rumours a somewhat against oblivion. But to return to myself—I h a more modest opinion of my book and it would be incorr to say even that I was thinking of those who might read as "my readers." For, as I have already shewn, th would not be my readers but readers of themselves, n book serving merely as a sort of magnifying glass, such the optician of Com … so th through my book I … their own selves.

praise or dispraise me but only to tell me if it is as I say, if the words they read in themselves are, indeed, the same as I have written (any possible discrepancies in this respect not being always attributable, by the way, to any mistake on my part but to the fact that the reader's eyes would not be of the type which my book would "fit" for comfortably reading in one's own self). And constantly changing the simile as I obtained a better and more material conception of the task to which I was going to devote myself, I thought how I would work at my book on my large, white-pine table, with Françoise looking on. As all the unpretentious persons who live close beside us acquire a certain intuitive comprehension of our work and as I had forgotten Albertine sufficiently to forgive Françoise for whatever she might have done to injure her, I would work near her and almost in her manner—at least, as she used to, for she was now so old she could scarcely see any more—for, pinning on an extra sheet here and there, I would construct my book, I dare not say ambitiously "like a cathedral," but simply like a dress. And if I did not have at hand all my papers—my "old rubbish," as Françoise called it—and just the one I needed was missing, Françoise would understand perfectly my exasperation, since she herself always used to say she could not sew unless she had the size thread and the buttons she needed and also because she had lived my life so long that she had developed a sort of instinctive understanding of literary work more correct than that possessed by many intelligent persons and, *a fortiori*, by stupid people. In the same way, years before, when I was writing my article for *Le Figaro*, whereas the old butler, with that sympathetic expression which always somewhat overestimates the arduousness of a kind of work one is not accustomed to performing and of which one has not even a clear conception—or even the discomfort of a habit one is free from, like the folk who say, "How it must tire you to sneeze like that"—used to pity writers sincerely, saying "How you must have to rack your brains over that work," Françoise, on the con-

trary, sensed my happiness and respected my work. She got angry only when I told Bloch about my articles beforehand, because she was afraid he would steal my ideas. "All these people," she would say, "you trust them too much; they're a lot of copy-cats." And Bloch, as a matter of fact, would establish a retroactive alibi for himself, whenever I outlined something he thought was good, by saying, "Why, that's funny, I've written something almost exactly like that. I must read it to you." (He could not have read it to me then and there but would go and write it that very evening.)

My papers—what Françoise called my "old rubbish"—by dint of being continually pasted together, would get torn here and there. When necessary, Françoise would help me mend them in the same way as she put patches on the worn parts of her dresses or, while waiting for the glazier (just as I was waiting for the printer) pasted a piece of newspaper over the broken pane of the kitchen window.

[illegible] too far gone. It's a pity; maybe that's your finest ideas. As they say at Combray, there aren't any furriers who know their business as well as the moths do. They always get into the best materials."

Moreover, since in this book the individual entities, human or otherwise, would be constructed from numerous impressions which, derived from many young girls, many churches, [illegible] de Norpois, the jelly of which was enriched by so many carefully selected pieces of meat? And I would realise what I had so much longed for in my walks along the Guermantes way but had believed impossible, just as I had believed it would be impossible when I went home ever to get accustomed to going to bed without kissing my mother, or,

later, to the idea that Albertine loved women, an idea I finally adjusted to without even being aware of its presence, for our gravest apprehensions, as well as our fondest hopes, are not beyond our strength and we are able in the end to overcome the former and realise the latter—Yes, this conception of time which I had just formulated warned me that I must at once set myself to this work. It was high time; this justified the anxiety which had come over me the moment I entered the drawing-room, when the made-up faces gave me a sense of the time lost. But was there yet time? The mind also has its landscapes which it is allowed to contemplate only for a moment. I had lived like a painter climbing a road overlooking a lake, which is hidden from his eyes by a curtain of rocks and trees. Through a breach he catches sight of it, has it all before him, takes out

painting

dawn!

One prerequisite to my book, such as I had conceived it just now in the library, was that I plumb to the very bottom impressions which I should first have to re-create with the aid of my memory. But my memory was exhausted. Then, too, as long as nothing had been begun, I could, indeed, be uneasy, even if I thought that at my age I still had several years before me, for my hour might strike in a few minutes. As a matter of fact, I must start from the idea that I had a body, in other words, that I was continually under the threat of a two-fold danger, external and internal. But even there I spoke in that way only for convenience of expression. For the internal danger, such as a cerebral hemorrhage, is external, being of the body. And having a body constitutes the principal danger that threatens the mind. The life of the thinking human being—which certainly is to be described less as a perfecting of physical, animal life than as an imperfect creation, still as rudimentary as the communal existence of protozoa in polyparies or the body of the whale and so on—is such, in the organisation of the spiritual life, that the body imprisons the mind in a fortress; soon the

fortress is besieged on all sides and in the end the mind must capitulate. But, admitting this distinction between the two kinds of danger that threaten the mind, and beginning with the external one, I recalled that, many times in my past life, in moments of mental stimulation, when some circumstance had suspended all physical activity for me—for instance when, half-intoxicated, I was leaving the restaurant at Rivebelle in a carriage to go to some nearby casino, it had happened to me to feel very definitely within myself the momentary subject of my thoughts and to understand that it was a mere matter of chance, not only that this subject had come into my mind at all but also that it had not been annihilated at that time along with my body. This mattered little to me. My gaiety was neither foresighted nor apprehensive. That this joy left me in a second and disappeared into thin air was of little consequence to me. But it was no longer the same now, the reason being that the happiness I felt did not come from a purely subjective tension of the nerves, which isolates us from the past, but on the contrary from a broadening out of my mind in which the past took shape again, became vividly present and gave me—but, alas, only for a moment—a sense of eternity. I fain would have bequeathed this last to those whom I might have enriched with my treasure. What I had felt in the library and sought to preserve was pleasure, it is true, but no longer selfish or, if so, then with a selfishness which could be made profitable to others—for all the fruitful forms of altruism in nature follow a selfish pattern in their development; human altruism which is not selfish is sterile, like that of the writer who interrupts his work to receive an unhappy friend, accept a public function or write propaganda articles.

The indifference I used to feel on my way back from Rivebelle was gone; I felt myself pregnant with the work which I was carrying within me, like some precious and fragile object which had been entrusted to me and which I desired to transmit intact to the other persons for whom it was destined. And to think that, when I went home pres-

ently, an accidental shock would suffice to destroy my body and force my mind, from which the life would be withdrawn, to abandon forever the ideas it was at this moment clasping to its bosom and shielding anxiously with its quivering flesh, not yet having had time to put them out of harm's way in a book. Now the feeling that I was the bearer of a literary work made an accident in which I might meet with death more to be dreaded, even absurd (in proportion as this work appeared to me necessary and enduring) inimical to my desire and to the eager aspiration of my thoughts, but none the less possible for all that, since accidents, being the product of material causes, may perfectly well take place when very different intentions, which they destroy without knowing what they are, make them most objectionable, as happens every day in the simplest incidents of life, as when, though we desire with all our heart not to make any noise on account of a sleeping friend, a carafe, placed too near the edge of a table, falls and wakes him.

I knew very well that my brain was a rich mineral basin where there was a vast area of extremely varied precious deposits. But would I have time to exploit them? I was the only person able to do this, for two reasons: with my death there would disappear, not only the one miner able to extract the minerals but the deposit itself; now, when I returned home presently, a collision between the auto I took and another would suffice to destroy my body and to force my mind to abandon my new ideas for all time. And, by a strange coincidence, this rational fear of danger was developing in me at a time when the idea of death had been for only a short while a matter of indifference to me. The fear of ceasing to be myself had formerly caused me horror and especially with each new love that came to me—for Gilberte, for Albertine—because I could not endure the idea that one day he who loved them would exist no longer, which would be a sort of death. But, after this fear had recurred many times, it was naturally transmitted into a confident serenity.

While the idea of death had thus in those days cast a

shadow over love for me, for a long time now the rem brance of love had aided me to contemplate death with fear, for I understood that it was no new thing to die that, on the contrary, I had already died many times si childhood. To take the most recent period—had I clung to Albertine even more than to life itself? Could that time have conceived of myself without my love for continuing to form part of me? Now, I no longer loved I was, not the person who used to love her but a diffe person who did not love her; I had ceased to love her w I had become another person. But I did not suffer on count of having become this other person and having cea to love Albertine; and, assuredly, some day no longer have my body could in no wise appear to me as sad a th as formerly had seemed to me the idea of some day longer loving Albertine. And yet how unimportant it appeared to me not to love her any more. These success deaths, so dreaded by the "me" they were to obliterate, so gentle and inconsequential once they had become a and when he who had feared them was no longer there feel them, had a while before made me realise how unint gent it would be to be afraid of death. And it was n shortly after I had become indifferent to death, that I beginning anew to fear it—under another form, it is tr and not for myself but for my book, to the full flowering which this life, menaced by so many dangers, was, at le for a while, indispensable. Victor Hugo said,

Il faut que l'herbe pousse et que les enfants meurent.

But I say that it is the cruel law of art that human bei should die and that we ourselves must die after exhausti the gamut of suffering so that the grass, not of oblivion of eternal life, may grow, the thick grass of fecund works art, on which future generations will come and gaily ha their "picnic lunch," without a thought for those who sle beneath I said "external dangers," but there are intern

dangers also. If I escaped an accident from without, who knows whether I might not be prevented from making full use of this merciful favour through some mischance occurring within myself, some internal catastrophe, some cerebral accident, before the months had passed that were needed for the writing of this book?

Even the cerebral accident was not necessary Some symptoms—indicated to me by a peculiar mental void and a tendency to forget things and have them come back to me only by accident, just as, when you are putting certain objects in order, you come across one you had forgotten and had not even thought to look for—made me feel like a miser whose broken treasure chest had allowed his riches to slip away one by one.

When I should return home presently through the Champs-Elysées, what guarantee had I that I would not be struck [illegible]

[illegible] we all, that the minute-hand now stands over the very point where the spring will be released to strike the hour? Possibly the fear of having already consumed almost the entire minute which precedes the first stroke of the hour and during which the stroke is making ready to fall, possibly the fear that it was about to be set in motion in my brain, was a sort of obscure sense of what was going to happen, a reflexion in the consciousness, so to speak, of the precarious condition of the brain, the arteries of which are about to [illegible] impossible than the sudden con- [illegible] many a wounded man [illegible] retained his *mental* lucidity and both the physician and his own desire to live seek to deceive him, he says, foreseeing what is going to happen, "I am going to die, I am ready," and he writes his farewell to his wife

This obscure sense of what was going to happen was conveyed to me by the strange thing which occurred [illegible]

had begun my book and which befell me in a manner I would never have expected. When I went out one evening, my friends thought me looking better than before; they expressed surprise that my hair was still black. But three times I nearly fell as I went down the stairs. I was away only two hours and yet, when I got home, I felt as if I had no memory, no power to think, no strength, no life at all. If someone had come to see me, to proclaim me king, to lay hold of me, to arrest me, I would have let them do to me whatever they wished without uttering a word or opening my eyes, like the people crossing the Caspian Sea who are taken with the worst form of seasickness and do not even make a feeble gesture of resistance when they are told they are going to be thrown overboard. Strictly speaking, I had no particular illness but I felt as though I had become incapable of anything, as frequently happens to an old man who, active the day before, breaks his hip or has an attack of indigestion and may for some time to come lead a bedridden existence which is only a more or less long preparation for the now inevitable end. One of my various selves—the one who used to go to those barbaric banquets called formal dinners, where for the white-shirted men and the semi-nude, feather-bedecked women values are so reversed that anyone who does not come, after accepting the invitation, or does not arrive until the roast is being served, commits a more reprehensible act than the immoral conduct discussed so lightly in the course of the dinner along with recent deaths, and where death or serious illness are the only excuses for not coming (and then only provided you notify your hostess of your dying condition in time for her to invite a fourteenth person)—that self within me had kept his society scruples and lost his memory. My other self, on the contrary, the one who had reached a clear conception of his task, had not forgotten. I had received an invitation from Mme. Molé and had learned that Mme. Sazerat's son was dead. I made up my mind to waste in sending apologies to Mme. Molé and condolences to Mme. Sazerat one of those

hours after which, my tongue paralysed, as was the case with my grandmother during her last illness, I would no longer be able to utter a word or even swallow some milk. But a few minutes later I had forgotten that I was to do this. Fortunate forgetfulness, as the remembrance of my work was vigilant and would employ in laying the first foundations the hour of extra existence which had thus reverted to me. Unluckily, as I took up a notebook to start writing, Mme. Molé's card of invitation slipped in front of me. Straightway my forgetful self which, however, took precedence over the other, as happens with all scrupulous barbarians who attend formal dinners, pushed the notebook aside and wrote to Mme. Molé—who, by the way, would doubtless have thought very highly of me for it, had she learned that I had put my reply to her invitation ahead of my architectural labours. Suddenly a remark in my reply reminded me that Mme. Sazerat had lost her son; I wrote to her also. Then, having sacrificed a real duty to the fictitious obligation of shewing myself courteous and sympathetic, I fell back exhausted, closed my eyes and for a week I merely vegetated. And yet, while all my useless duties to which I was ready to sacrifice the real one went out of my head in a few minutes, the idea of the thing I was to construct did not leave me for an instant. I knew not whether it would be a church in which the true believers would be able little by little to learn some truths and discover some harmonies, the great, comprehensive plan, or would stand, forever unvisited, on the summit of an island, like a druid monument. But I had decided to devote to it all my strength, which was leaving me slowly, as though reluctant and wishing to allow me time, having completed the outer structure, to close the funereal door. Soon I was able to shew a few sketches. No one understood a word. Even those who were favourable to my conception of the truths which I intended later to carve within the temple congratulated me on having discovered them with a microscope when I had, on the contrary, used a telescope to perceive things which, it is true,

were very small but situated afar off and each of them a world in itself. Whereas I had sought great laws, they called me one who grubs for petty details. Moreover, what was the use of my undertaking it? I had had a certain facility as a young man and Bergotte had declared my schoolboy writings "perfect"*; but instead of working, I had lived in idleness, in the dissipation of a life of pleasure, amid sickness, care of my health and strange humours, and I was taking up my work on the eve of my death, with no knowledge of my craft. I no longer felt equal to facing either my obligations to human beings or my duties to my thought and work—still less to both. As for the former, my task was somewhat simplified by my habit of forgetting the letters I had to write. The loss of my memory aided me a little by cutting out some of my obligations; my work filled their place. But suddenly at the end of a month the association of ideas brought back my memory, together with my remorse, and I was crushed with a sense of my own impotence. I was astonished to find myself indifferent to the criticism made of me but the truth is that, from the day when my legs had trembled so as I descended the stairs, I had become in- [illegible] while [illegible] ly [illegible] is not due to the expectation that my work would not receive until after my death [illegible] ed to me to d[illegible] what they w[illegible] that. In reality, if I thought of my work and not at all of the letters to be answered, this was no longer because I recognised any great difference in importance between the two objects, as I had done in the days of my idleness and then in the time of my active work up to the evening when I was obliged to seize hold of the railing of the staircase. The organisation of my memory and my preoccupations was closely bound up

* Allusion to the author's first book, *Les Plaisirs et les Jours* (Note in the French edition.)

with my work, perhaps because, whereas the letters were forgotten immediately after being received, the idea of my work was in my mind, always the same, in a perpetual state of development. But it also had become irksome to me. It was to me like a son whose dying mother must still take upon herself the fatigue of looking after him between injections and cuppings. Possibly she still loves him but she now knows it only through the exhausting obligation she is under to take care of him. In me the powers of the writer were no longer equal to the inconsiderate demands of the work. Since that day on the staircase, nothing concerning the social world, no happiness, whether it came from the friendliness of people, the progress of my work, the hope of fame, any longer penetrated to my consciousness except as such a pale ray of sunlight that it no longer had the power to warm me, put life into me, give me any desire whatsoever; and even at that, wan though it was, it was still too dazzling for my eyes and I preferred to close them and turn my head toward the wall. It seems to me, as far as I was able to feel the movement of my lips, that I must have had an imperceptible little smile at one corner of my mouth when a lady wrote me, "I was *surprised* not get a reply to my letter." Nevertheless, that reminded me of the letter and I answered her. In order that I might not be thought an ingrate, I tried to place my present courtesy on a par with the courtesy people might have had for me. And I was crushed under the superhumanly wearisome burdens of life which I imposed upon my existence as it ebbed to its agonising close.

This idea of death took up its permanent abode within me as does love for a woman. Not that I loved death, I detested it. But, doubtless because I had pondered over it from time to time as over a woman one does not yet love, now the thought of it adhered to the deepest stratum of my brain so completely that I could not turn my attention to anything without first relating it to the idea of death and, even if I was not occupied with anything but was in a state of complete repose, the idea of death was with me as continuously

as the idea of myself. I do not think that, on the day I became half-dead, it was the accompanying symptoms, such as my inability to descend the staircase, to recall a name, to get up, which gave rise, even by an unconscious process of reasoning, to the idea of death, the idea that I was already nearly dead, but rather that all this had come at the same time, that inevitably the great mirror of the mind was reflecting a new reality. And yet I did not see how one could pass without warning from the ills I was enduring to actual death. But then I thought of others, of all those who die every day without the hiatus between their illness and their death seeming to us extraordinary. I even thought it was only because I saw them from within (still more than through the consequent disappointment of my hopes) that certain ailments did not appear to me fatal when considered singly, although I believed in my death, just as those who are the most firmly convinced that their term has come are nevertheless easily persuaded that, if they cannot pronounce certain words, it has nothing to do with a stroke or an attack of aphasia, but comes from a fatigue of the tongue, from a nervous affection akin to stammering or from exhaustion consequent upon an attack of indigestion.

As for me, it was something quite other than a dying man's farewell to his wife which I had to write, something long and addressed to more than one person. Long to write! Only in the daytime, at best, might I try to sleep. If I worked, it would be only at night. But I should need many nights, possibly a hundred, possibly a thousand. And I would live in the anxiety of not knowing whether the master of my destiny, less indulgent than the Sultan Sheriar, when I inter[illegible] would permit n[illegible] g. N[illegible] *Nights*, any more than the *Mémoires* of Saint-Simon, which likewise were written at night, any more than any of the books I had loved so deeply that, superstitiously devoted to them as to the women I loved, I could not, in my childish

naïveté, imagine without horror a book that might be different from them. But like Elstir and Chardin, one cannot reproduce what one loves without abandoning it. Doubtless my books also, like my earthly being, would finally some day die. But one must resign oneself to the idea of death. One accepts the idea that in ten years one's self, and in a hundred years one's books, will no longer exist. Eternal existence is not promised to books any more than to men. It might be a book as long as *The Arabian Nights* but entirely different. It is quite true that, when one is enamoured of a book, one would like to create something exactly like it but one must sacrifice one's love of the moment and think, not of one's predilection but of a truth which does not ask our preferences and forbids us to give them a thought. And it is only by following this truth that one happens occasionally to come upon what one abandoned and, even while keeping them out of one's mind, to write the *Arabian Nights* or the *Mémoires of Saint-Simon* of another period. But had I still time? Was it not too late?

In any event, if I still had the strength to accomplish my work, I realised that the nature of the circumstances which to-day, even during the progress of this reception at the Princesse de Guermantes', had given me at one and the same time the idea of my work and the fear of not being able to carry it out would assuredly before all else imprint upon it the form I had once dimly sensed in the church at Combray, during certain days which had deeply influenced me, a form which usually remains invisible to us, the form of Time. This dimension of Time which I had once vaguely felt in the church at Combray I would try to make continually perceptible in a transcription of human life necessarily very different from that conveyed to us by our deceptive senses. There are, it is true—this was proven to me, as has been seen, by sundry episodes in this narrative—many other errors of our senses which distort for us the true aspect of this world. But after all, in the more accurate transcription which I would do my utmost to give, I would at least be

able not to change the location of sounds, to take care not to detach them from their cause, with which the intelligence retroactively associates them—although to make rain hum in the middle of a room and our boiling *tisane* come down in torrents in the courtyard cannot, when all is said and done, be more disconcerting than what artists have so often done in representing as very near us or very far away, according as the laws of perspective, the intensity of the colours and the illusion of the first glance make them appear to us, a sail or a mountain peak which our reason will later move, sometimes an enormous distance, farther away or nearer to us.

I might, although this error is more serious, continue, as is customary, to assign features to the countenance of a passing [illegible] he nose, cheeks and [illegible] a vacant space on [illegible] And even if I did not have the leisure for that far more important matter, namely, to prepare the hundred masks that needs must be attached to a single face—even if one would merely portray it according to the various pairs of eyes that look at it and the meanings they read into its features and, in the case of one and the same pair of eyes, according to the hope and fear (or, on the contrary, the love and confidence) which over so many years hide the changes due to age; even, moreover, if I did not (although my liaison with Albertine sufficed to prove to me that otherwise all is spurious and deceitful) undertake to represent certain persons, not outwardly but as they exist within us, where their slightest acts may induce [illegible] undertake also to [illegible] to the [illegible] to the serenity of our confidence, which makes an object seem so small, whereas the mere shadow of a risk instantly multiplies its size; even if I could not introduce these changes and many others (the necessity for which, if one desires to paint things as they really are, has become apparent in the course

of this narrative) into the transcription of a universe which required to be entirely redrawn, at any rate I would not fail, above all else, to describe man as having the *length*, not of his body but of his years, which he must drag about with him from place to place, an ever increasing burden which overcomes him in the end. Moreover, everyone realises that we occupy a steadily growing place in Time and this universality could not fail to rejoice me, since it was truth, the truth vaguely sensed by each, which I must seek to make clear to all. Not only is everyone conscious that we occupy a place in Time, but this place even the most simple-minded person measures approximately, just as he would measure the place we occupy *in space*. True, the measuring is often incorrect, but the fact that it was considered possible shews that age was thought of as something measurable.

I also asked myself, "Not only have I still time, but am I going to be able to complete my work?" By forcing me, like a stern spiritual adviser, to declare myself dead to the world, illness had done me a great service—for, an the grain of wheat die not after it hath been sown, it will abide alone; but if it die, it will bear much fruit—and after indolence had protected me from my facility in writing, ill health was perhaps going to save me from my indolence; but this same illness had exhausted my mental faculties and (as I had noticed long before, when I ceased to love Albertine) also the power of my memory. But re-creating through the memory impressions which must then be plumbed to their depths, brought into the light and transformed into intellectual equivalents, was this not one of the prerequisites, almost the very essence, of a work of art such as I had conceived it in the library a few moments ago? Ah, if only I still had the mental power that was intact on that evening the memory of which I evoked when my eye fell on *François le Champi!* It was that evening, when my mother abdicated her authority, which marked the commencement of the waning of my will-power and my health, as well as the beginning of my grandmother's lingering death. Every-

thing was predetermined from the moment when, unable any longer to endure the idea of waiting until the morning to press a kiss upon my mother's face, I made up my mind, jumped out of bed and, in my nightshirt, went and sat by the window through which the moonlight came, until I heard M. Swann leave. My parents had accompanied him to the door; I heard the door open, the bell tinkle and the door shut again. Even at this moment, in the mansion of the Prince de Guermantes, I heard the sound of my parents' footsteps as they accompanied M. Swann and the reverberating, ferruginous, interminable, sharp, jangling tinkle of the little bell which announced to me that at last M. Swann had gone and Mamma was going to come upstairs—I heard these sounds again, the very identical sounds themselves, although situated so far back in the past. Then, thinking over all the events that necessarily ranged themselves between the moment when I heard those sounds and the Guermantes reception, I was startled at the thought that it was, indeed, this bell which was still tinkling within me and that I could in no wise change its sharp janglings, since, having forgotten just how they died away, to recapture it and hear it distinctly, I was forced to close my ears to the sound of the conversations the masks were carrying on around me. To endeavour to listen to it from nearby, I had to descend again into my own consciousness. It must be, then, that this tinkling was still there and also, between it and the present moment, all the infinitely unrolling past which I had been unconsciously carrying within me. When the bell tinkled, I was already in existence and, since that night, for me to have been able to hear the sound again, there must have been no break of continuity, not a moment of rest for me, no cessation of existence, of thought, of consciousness of myself, since this distant moment still clung to me and I could recapture it, go back to it, merely by descending more deeply within myself. It was this conception of time as incarnate, of past years as still close held within us, which I was now determined to bring out into such bold relief in

my book. And it is because they thus contain all the hours of days gone by that human bodies can do such injury to those who love them, because they contain so many past memories, joys and desires, already effaced for them but so cruel for one who contemplates and carries back in the domain of Time the cherished body of which he is jealous, jealous even to the point of desiring its destruction. For after death Time withdraws from the body, and the memories —so pale and insignificant—are effaced from her who no longer exists, and soon will be from him whom they still torture, and the memories themselves will perish in the end when the desire of a living body is no longer there to keep them alive.

There came over me a feeling of profound fatigue at the realisation that all this long stretch of time not only had been uninterruptedly lived, thought, secreted by me, that it was my life, my very self, but also that I must, every minute of my life, keep it closely by me, that it upheld me, that I was perched on its dizzying summit, that I could not move without carrying it about with me.

The date when I heard the sound—so distant and yet so deep within me—of the little bell in the garden at Combray was a landmark I did not know I had available in this enormous dimension of Time. My head swam to see so many years below me, and yet within me, as if I were thousands of leagues in height.

I now understood why it was that the Duc de Guermantes, whom, as I looked at him sitting in a chair, I marvelled to find shewing his age so little, although he had so many more years than I beneath him, as soon as he rose and tried to stand erect, had tottered on trembling limbs (like those of aged archbishops who have nothing solid on them except their metallic cross, with the young divinity students flocking assiduously about them) and had wavered as he made his way along the difficult summit of his eighty-three years, as if men were perched on giant stilts, sometimes taller than church spires, constantly growing and finally rendering their

progress so difficult and perilous that they suddenly fall. I was alarmed that mine were already so tall beneath my feet; it did not seem as if I should have the strength to carry much longer attached to me that past which already extended so far down and which I was bearing so painfully within me! If, at least, there were granted me time enough to complete my work, I would not fail to stamp it with the seal of that Time the understanding of which was this day so forcibly impressing itself upon me, and I would therein describe men—even should that give them the semblance of monstrous creatures—as occupying in Time a place far more considerable than the so restricted one allotted them in space, a place, on the contrary, extending boundlessly since, giant-like, reaching far back into the years, they touch simultaneously epochs of their lives—with countless intervening days between—so widely separated from one another in Time.

The End.

G39 THE BASIC WRITINGS OF SIGMUND FREUD
G40 THE COMPLETE TALES AND POEMS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE
G41. FARRELL, JAMES T Studs Lonigan
G42 THE POEMS AND PLAYS OF TENNYSON
G43 DEWEY, JOHN Intelligence in the Modern World John Dewey's Philosophy
G44 DOS PASSOS, JOHN U S A.

G48 THE METROPOLITAN OPERA GUIDE
G49 TWAIN, MARK Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.
G50 WHITMAN, WALT Leaves of Grass

sic.

Before the Fact, Francis Iles
Trent's Last Case E. C. Bentley.

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MENT.
G70 THE COMPLETE POETRY OF JOHN DONNE AND WILLIAM BLAKE.
G71 SIXTEEN FAMOUS EUROPEAN PLAYS

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